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To Matthew White
With Sincere Regards
John Wilstach
Dec. 25, 1918

"If you don't like the
reading look at the
pictures."

GAIETY AND GEORGE GROSSMITH

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POLLY PEACHUM

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BEGGAR'S OPERA"

BY

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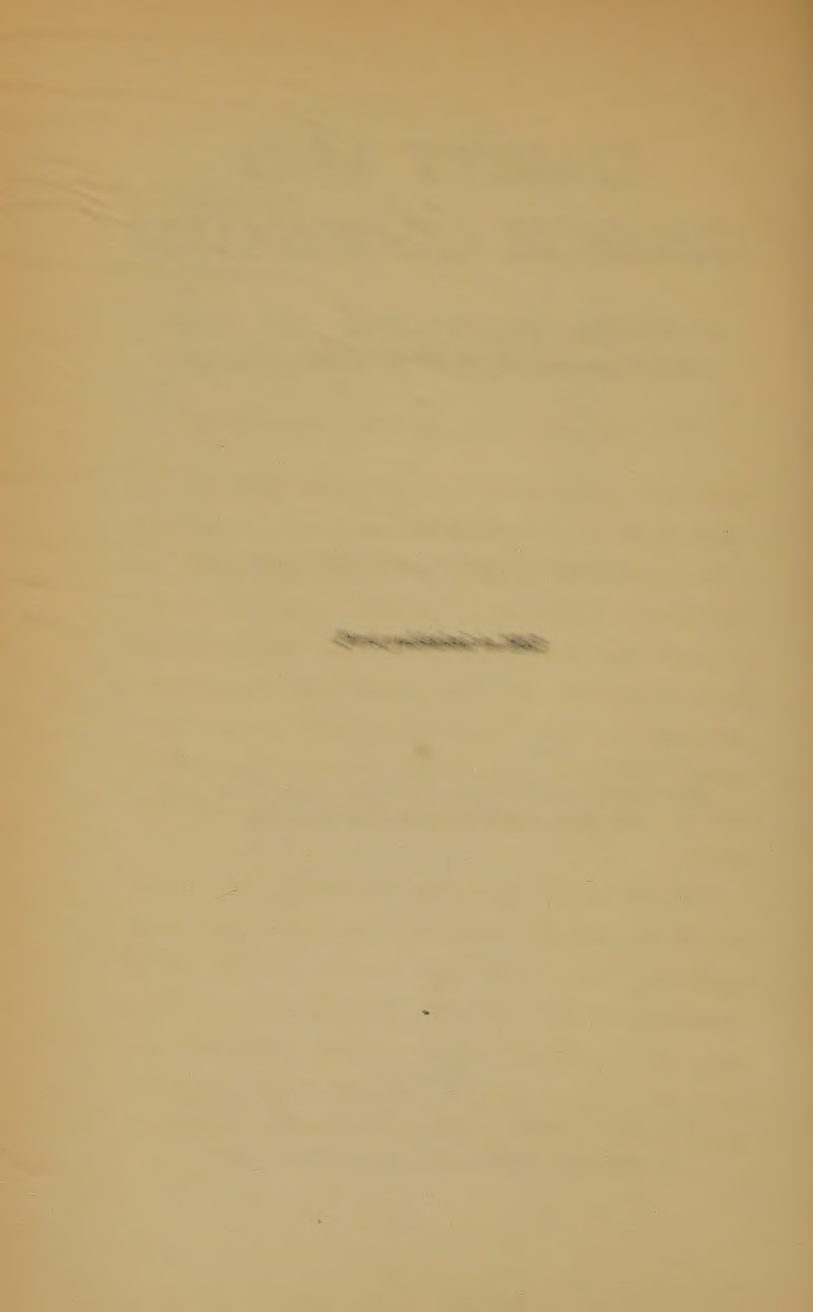
GAIETY AND GEORGE GROSSMITH

RANDOM REFLECTIONS ON THE
SERIOUS BUSINESS OF ENJOYMENT

CHRONICLED BY
STANLEY NAYLOR

*With frontispiece in colour by Miss Olive Snell and
50 illustrations in half-tone and line*

LONDON
STANLEY PAUL & CO
31 ESSEX STREET, STRAND, W.C.



FOREWORD

BY THE BOSWELL OF THE CHRONICLE

GEORGE GROSSMITH, if we take him at his own modest valuation of himself, is merely "the man who plays the 'silly ass' parts at the Gaiety Theatre"; he is the man to whom, if I mistake not, Max Beerbohm has conceded his willingness to raise a national monument because he has "raised banality to the sublime." Every Londoner knows Grossmith, for is he not London's official man-about-town?

"Pleasure for pleasure, we would far rather enjoy Grossmith than listen to the usual actor spouting 'to be or not to be' in the usual wearisome way," quoth *The Times*, not long ago, in a clever article which suddenly digressed from a stately discussion of the relative merits of the different serious dramatists,

including Galsworthy, Barker, and Shaw, to an amusing dissertation on Grossmith's stage-manner, his dancing, his songs, his love-making, the cut and fit of his clothes, the curve of his immaculate topper, and the nice conduct of his cane. And as playgoers, how many of us have a knack of digressing in the same way ?

Professionally, Grossmith is the lightest, the airiest, the most irresponsible of men. Occasionally, off the stage of course, he is seen in graver mood. Still, gaiety remains his lifework ; and just as most men reflect their business in their personality, when they are away from it in their leisure hours, so Grossmith in private life is—well, far from forlorn. Rarely is he so grave that he can forget to be gay. But behind the personality of Grossmith the jester, there is always Grossmith the man—a shrewd although tolerant observer, to whom all the world's a stage, the most interesting, in fact, of all possible stages. He knows well his London, while he knows even better his Paris. And he has put his knowledge to some account,

True, it may be argued he is as yet a comparative youngster who has only "the lighter philosophies at his tongue's tip." To chat with him for long on friendly terms, however, is to realise that he has pondered over more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in the philosophy of many a more staid and elderly Wiseacre. . . . Although he is an Englishman, he has what has been described as the happiest faculty of a Frenchman: *Il possède la vertu des vertus : La Vie.*

Having spent many a diverting half-hour with Grossmith, in the discussion of all sorts of themes, I ventured to think his random reflections would make an interesting record. I could not persuade him to write this little book, but he agreed to talk it instead.

S. N.

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GAIETY AND GEORGE GROSSMITH

CHAPTER I

THE ART OF *SAVOIR-VIVRE*

It happens, one evening, at the end of the night's work at the Gaiety Theatre, that the talk veers round to that most misunderstood of all the arts—the art of *savoir-vivre*.

“The longer I live the more I realise that cut-and-dried views on the problem are a mistake,” says Grossmith. “Immediately you put them to the test they are liable to be upset, if they do not actually play you false. . . . The people who talk lightly on life and how it should be lived, are either very young or very stupid; with most of us it is a case of: ‘Two glasses of port, a

roll in the grass, and away goes mother's advice.'

"Many of us have a genius for mapping out our lives, but how few of us can follow the map? As soon as we make a fair start on the road some one or something stands in our way. The aggravating person or thing which throws us so completely out of gear all depends, of course, on the particular prank fate has decided to play on us. It may be a thirst for conviviality, a mania for religion, or, as Stevenson would have said, 'the sight of a pretty face round the corner' that does the damage. It may be, again, a death in the family, a marriage, or, if we listen to the complaints of our much-married friends, too many births.

"Struggle? Why, of course, life is a struggle. That is what it is meant for. If we were not all constantly struggling to achieve, the great human comedy would not be half so diverting; it would be what the journalists call: 'wholly lacking in dramatic interest'; it would soon be played out.

"'Everybody's struggling' in one form or

The Three Georges!!!
 { Sir, shot by
 Miss Gibson }

1911

~~7~~



I say! The middle George, has cut us out
 as far as good looks are concerned? (No! No! No! No!)

A CHRISTMAS-CARD FROM "GEE-GEE SENIOR."

another . . . There are men who are struggling to make fortunes, while others are struggling to spend them. There are men who are struggling to get into society, while others are struggling to get out of it. There are men who are struggling against falling in love with other men's wives, while others are struggling to fall in love with their own. There are men who are struggling to earn their daily bread, while others are struggling to eat a caviare sandwich.

"We are all of us struggling to attain some object in life, even if it happens to be one not worth attaining. . . . Take the case of the luckiest man I know. An exceptionally good-looking fellow, he is married to one of the prettiest girls in London. He held a commission in a crack Hussar regiment, is a member of the R.Y.S., and has a good deal more money than he can spend. . . . Surely, you would think, he, if any man, should be at peace with the world. But, oh dear, no! . . . 'If it takes me twenty years of my life and half my fortune, I'll get back on that man,' he told me fiercely, one day, at the

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Club, as a mutual acquaintance passed through the lounge. 'Why, what has he done to you?' I asked. 'Oh, I don't know,' he muttered; 'but I don't think he likes me.' And so, you might go on indefinitely, showing that, however you may live it, life on this planet is always a struggle.

"But what we English are inclined to forget is that, although perpetual conflict may be Nature's law, it has its compensations. To balance it, so to speak, we have been given the faculty of enjoyment. . . . Yet do we really know how to enjoy ourselves? Frenchmen say, most emphatically 'No'; and they are always immensely tickled when inspired prophets arise in our midst with the warning that we are becoming a 'pleasure-ridden' people and must be made good by Divine grace—and the additional aid of an Act of Parliament. 'Why, in England,' they say, 'you don't know the meaning of the word "pleasure."' You set yourselves to play as seriously as you set to work. With what result? If you would see an Englishman at his gloomiest, watch him closely when he is

striving to be gay. Is there, I ask you, any spectacle more unutterably sad than an Englishman at a Covent Garden ball? He either looks as if he were a chief mourner, if not the actual tombstone at a funeral, or else he indulges in antics that are only fit for a bear-garden.

“And, sometimes, when I come across my fellow-countrymen at play, I must confess I am almost inclined to agree. What is an Englishman’s chief idea of gaiety at a supper-party? Simply to throw bread about and make hunting-noises. And curiously enough, if he happens to be a man who has rarely seen, much less taken part in a fox-chase, the description all the better applies.

“The trouble with us English is that we are seldom thoroughly happy unless our amusements take a tangible shape. We must have some blatantly outward and visible sign of the fact that we are enjoying ourselves. When we are at play, we must be sitting in a motor-car or playing with a ball, definitely doing something, in fact.

“We haven’t learnt the art of the *flaneur*—

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the man who is happy doing nothing. We don't understand that gaiety is an instinct that springs from within and need not be a question of immediate environment. To be gay, it is not strictly necessary—although, if I were a good business-man, I ought to say, perhaps, that it is highly advisable—to go to the Gaiety Theatre. If you have the true spirit of gaiety within you, it is possible, even if it is not probable, to feel just as gay elsewhere and in other circumstances—when you are at the annual entertainment of your children's school or shopping with your wife, for example.

“I firmly believe we fritter away as much time as the French or any other nation. We delight to loaf and talk together almost as much, but we do it rather shamefacedly. The average Englishman is not so inhuman that he will not ask a friend to have a drink, or that he is above attempting to build up a reputation for repartee; as he rallies the barmaid in the process of drinking. But it takes him some little time to warm to the business. For the first five minutes or so, he looks

almost furtively round him—rather as if he expected, suddenly, to face the accusing eye of his grandmother or some other admonishing angel. . . .

“Hence, need we wonder that, despite all those sterling qualities for which the English are admired, there are times when we seem to the foreigner to be a sad-eyed race? ‘The glad-eye,’ that now classic phrase in our language, is heard on everybody’s lips. But how about England’s ‘sad-eye’? Those of us who have the gift of seeing ourselves as others see us realise that the one is quite as marked a national characteristic as the other.

“Yet, in England, although a stranger may doubt it, we are just as keen as the people of any other country in our efforts to solve in one form or another the problem of how to be happy—how to be happy though married, how to be happy though single, how to be happy though poor, or—an equally hard nut to crack—how to be happy though rich. . . . If, so far, we have not altogether succeeded, it may be because as a nation we have been solidly prosperous for so long that too many

of us only know how to be happy in terms of £ s. d.

“The happiest people, all the while, are those who have learnt how to lose money cheerfully. For true happiness has nothing to do with your balance at the bank. I found this out the second time I visited New York. When I had gone there before I could only afford to stay in a modest boarding-house ; but every one was so friendly and kind that I enjoyed the experience immensely. On my next visit, I was rather more opulent, so I started by putting up at one of the big skyscraper hotels, and there was nothing like the same feeling of intimacy.

“There I would sit, surrounded by Louis XIV Street furniture, the temporal lord of all I surveyed, feeling a veritable Croesus in the dollar-laden atmosphere, but, at the same time, weary, worn, and more than a trifle depressed. . . . In the midst of this lonely grandeur, I must see some one—a friend or a doctor. If I touched a bell I knew just what would happen. Up would come a bell-boy, probably coloured, with ice-water. . . .

And the performance would repeat itself nearly all day.

“Had I a want, I had only to press a button and some one would hurry to my door with all the swiftness of a machine to inquire just what it was; and while, I admit, he was usually enough of a human being to bring me at the end of an hour or two the exact opposite of the thing I required, there still remained something frightfully mechanical about the whole place. No one was interested in me. What if I died in the night? The luxuriousness of my surroundings seemed a poor compensation for the loneliness with which I was seized. For being out of sorts in this way, I don’t blame the hotel—I blame myself; but I soon went back to the boarding-house.

“Although I can’t say yet that I have ever been either, I believe a man is quite as likely to be happy if he is a pauper as if he is a Rothschild. . . . The main founder of the Rothschild fortunes was not happy. His life story, published some months ago, showed, on the contrary, how miserable he was. Always

his own personal interests had to be sacrificed to the interests of his vast wealth. 'I have never been able to have what I really wanted,' he used to say, 'not even the woman I loved.' But then, when you come to think of it, was this remarkable? Because who does get just what he wants in life? Everybody's heaven is different from the heaven of everybody else.

"The Duchess of Sutherland once confessed that, for her, Elysium would be life in a cottage, whereas to people who actually live in cottages, the more ample prospect of life in a castle comes rather nearer the mark. And it may be that life in Golders Green has celestial possibilities for people who dwell in West Ham. . . . A season or two ago, again, on my going with a Society woman of my acquaintance to see the illuminations at the White City Exhibition and remarking to her: 'Isn't it heavenly?' as a somewhat tired tribute to Mr. Imre Kiralfy's wonderful skill, her answer was: 'Oh, do you think so? For my part, I hope to find the scenic effects in the hands of Professor Reinhardt when I go aloft.'"



"BEAUTIFUL, BOUNTIFUL BERTIE."

In "The Shop Girl."



THE STAGE DEBUT OF MISS MARIE STUDHOLME
AND "GEE-GEE."

A scene from "Haste to the Wedding," by W. S. Gilbert.

Photos by Ellis & Walery.

“No one can know,” Grossmith fully admits, “whether he has really found the secret of how to live until he has solved the difficult problem of how to grow old.

“Naturally different people face the bogey of declining years in different ways. Rather than surrender, some women resort to massage and liquid paraffin, while their men-folk are not nearly so philosophical, but show the white feather by beginning to growl. . . . I don’t know when grumbling first came into vogue—but as a light form of recreation it is as popular with a certain type of elderly man to-day as it was with elderly women in King Alfred’s cake-burning days.

“Never having lived in them, I feel no pang of regret for ‘the good old days.’ Even if this is the worst of all possible worlds, why not make the best of a bad job? Is present-day life harder to live than it used to be? To be trundled along in a stage-coach in the days before road-making was a science doesn’t strike me as nearly so exhilarating an experience as to travel by an express train, a taxicab, or an aeroplane. And to some of us, the

lethargy of the olden times might prove rather more strenuous than the so-called hustle of to-day. 'Do you ever walk?' I heard one weary youth ask another lately, in a sudden wild burst of energy. 'Well, let's walk to a taxi.'

"Among hoary-headed grumblers, the 'Decline and Fall of the British Empire' is a favourite topic of discussion. You have only to enter the smoke-room of practically any club in London to meet the genial pessimist who is willing and ready to inform you, and every one else whom it may concern, that the country is going headlong to the dogs in much the same airy style as he will tell you how he is completely off golf, or how he knows a good and certain cure for both rheumatism and a cold in the head.

" 'Old England's death knell has sounded.' This is the comforting message this prophetic Englishman has reserved exclusively for your benefit—at least, so you may think until you hear him again delivering the same goods to somebody else the next afternoon. 'I admit the old country may last our time,' he

tells you consolingly. ‘It is that poor little chap Posterity who will have to bear the brunt of all this present-day bungling.’ So he lets off steam. It would be all right, of course, if he talked to some purpose, and forthwith set to work to stamp out the universal canker that he sees. But no, fortified by the fragrant aroma of a specially choice cigar which becomes even more fragrant when it is enjoyed from the refuge of a more than usually comfortable arm-chair, he seems content to go on fiddling while Rome burns.

“Well, that is how some men look out on life as they grow old. . . . But we don’t all groan beneath the burden of age in the same way, thank Heaven ! There still remain men and women who have contrived to grow old without being bores ; and for more delightful companionship than theirs no man could wish. I begged one charming white-haired old lady friend of mine to let me into her secret—to tell me how she had been able to keep so young in spirit in spite of the flight of time,

“To know how, as the result of the experience which a long life alone can bring, to grow wiser without growing, at the same time, sadder—that, surely, is a thing worth knowing. ‘I think people who would be happy when they are old should cling to the gaiety of their youth, while blending it with the philosophy of age,’ was this old lady’s reply. ‘You can’t be happy when you are old unless you are philosophic. I like to think I am like the woman philosopher who said you must not mind the rainy days. Sunshine or rain, I try to feel cheerful. Nowadays, when it rains, I say to myself: “After all, what does it matter?”’”

CHAPTER II

“ THE ARTISTIC TEMPERAMENT ”

NOWADAYS, the artistic label is fastened indiscriminately by irresponsible hands on every Tom, Dick, and Harry of the theatrical world ; whereas, as Grossmith says, on another evening, “ players who are really in earnest have precious little time to talk tall about art. It seems to me art is like religion. The people who know most about its inner mysteries say least.

“ The tall-talking actor or actress is, notoriously, he or she who has not arrived, and probably never will. When I was very young, I knew a lady who walked on in melodrama and constantly talked in this strain. If, listening to her, you had taken her at the same valuation she set upon herself, you would have fancied she was a budding

Bernhardt. Her supreme misfortune was, alas, that her talent never burst from the bud! 'What is it you object to?' she was reported to have inquired plaintively of her *fiancé*, on his trying to disentangle himself from her. 'Is it me ancestry, or me art?'

"One of the best definitions of the so-called 'Artistic Temperament' I have yet come across is that of a racing-man in a witty novel by Duncan Schwann. 'You may take it from me,' this sporting character says in effect, 'the Artistic Temperament is a damned bad horse to back. It's by Swelled Head out of Tommy Rot and it's no starter.'

"On intimate acquaintance, the actor of to-day no longer proves to be such a *poseur* as the outside public imagine. Notwithstanding the absorbing claims of high art, he usually finds time to get his hair cut. And if he should put himself for a stray quarter of an hour on rather a high perch, some obliging person inevitably turns up to drag him off it. . . . 'Ulloa, George, how's business?' was the salute given to me by a nigger troupe in a boat at Henley.

“ At Goring Regatta, again, a friend of mine happened to overhear this little dialogue :

“ First Elderly Gentleman, nodding his head ominously in my direction : ‘ There’s George Grossmith.’

“ Second Elderly Gentleman, apparently much astonished, after taking stock of me, very carefully, for a few seconds : ‘ Well, well, you do surprise me ! He’s quite a gentlemanly-looking young fellow, *considering what he is !* ’

“ Another time, when motoring with some ladies, I called at a wayside inn for tea, which was served to us in the garden behind. ‘ Why, it’s Mr. Grossmith,’ cried the landlady, with the air of one who has met a kindred spirit. ‘ I recognised you at once, and I’m real glad to see you, because I have a son in your business myself.’ The next moment a little figure popped up from over the other side of the hedge. ‘ Come here, Percy, and be introduced,’ the proud mother called. Then in an undertone : ‘ You’ll no doubt have heard of him. He’s billed as the “ Royal Surrey Dwarf.” ’

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“And just to show what stands in the minds of some people as the kind of personality one must possess to rise to the top in our profession, here is a little experience which recently befell me of a somewhat similar kind. A charwoman asked me the other day to find a place for her son in the *Alhambra revue*. ‘He’s that funny he’d make you die of laughing,’ she explained; ‘you see, he has fits.’

“Then, last year an actor wrote to me asking me to give him an engagement. ‘I must apologise for troubling you,’ he wound up by saying, ‘but I have only had two engagements during the past twelve months. One was in the crowd at the Coronation Command performance of “Julius Cæsar,” and the other was at the Theatrical Garden Party at the Botanical Gardens. Neither carried any important money.’

“Another curious letter, written in all seriousness and in very careful handwriting, reached me, only yesterday, from a clever comedian to whom I offered a small part several weeks ago. ‘My dear Grossmith,’ it

AMERICAN SNAPSHOTS.



WATCHING NIAGARA FALLS.



AT BREAKFAST IN BUFFALO.



DISCUSSING THE PLOT OF A PLAY WITH SAM BERNARD,
THE "TEDDY PAYNE" OF AMERICA.

runs, ‘your kind letter has only just been forwarded to me. I should have been delighted to accept the part you offer, but at the moment I am in a home for inebriates.’

“ Yet, I admit, in our off-moments, despite the unpleasant reminders that awake us from our reverie all along the line, even the most common-sensible of us may be trapped into a little light conversation on Art for Art’s sake. In the twilight of a late Saturday afternoon, a group of us at the Beefsteak Club once fell to talking of the higher side of our life-work in the most promising way. But, even then, somebody brought us down to earth with a bang by putting the query : ‘How about food ? What is the best meal to start the night’s work on ? ’

“ Of course, when ‘ food ’ is mentioned, actors, like all other men, become expert conversationalists. The effect on this occasion was electrical ; we had all our own pet theories as to what an actor should eat. It gave me a bit of a shock—fortunately no *matinée* maidens were present—to find that he who is, perhaps, the foremost romantic actor of the

day favoured steak and onions and a bottle of Guinness's stout as the most inspiring of all preludes to an evening's love-making. A leading actor of the robustious school, on the other hand, declared that he rarely took more than a watercress sandwich, a stick of celery, and a little cheese, with nothing to drink, to cheer him on his way; while the regimen varied as regards the rest of us from mutton-chops and fried soles to boiled eggs, a phosferine tablet and tea-and-toast.

"Then, suddenly, it was noticed that the most veteran actor of us all—a popular rotund comedian, who, alas, is with us no more, had not spoken a word on the subject. 'What do you think?' somebody then asked him. 'Oh, it doesn't matter what you eat,' he grunted. 'The point is: Have you the brains for the part? I very much doubt it.'

"The actor who is in full working harness cannot proceed very far without submitting himself to the yoke of three separate sets of people who, considered together, form a highly imposing Trinity. First come his managers—or, to be more exact, unless he

stands at the top of the tree in his profession, he goes to them ; next, there are his fellow-artistes, with whom he must work in absolute harmony if he is to give the public the benefit of his best efforts ; and, last, but by no means least, from the standpoint of his own personal comfort, there is his dresser.

“ He is soon dispossessed of any inflated notion he may have about the superfine quality of his artistic gifts when he runs up against any one of these three great Powers. To include his dresser in the Trinity may sound rather as if one were a quick-change artiste. Yet, it is strictly true. A dresser stands in the same capacity to an actor as a caddie to a great golf-player. He can inspire, he can aid, he can prompt, and—a more important function still—in some cases, he can supply or withhold refreshment, as he thinks fit. And conversely, of course, if he chooses, he can be and sometimes is, as irritating as he should be useful.

“ The qualities which go to the making of an ideal dresser stamp him out as a man apart. In the course of his duties, he must

take care not to come between the actor and his part. He should know how to efface himself if necessary, and yet how to be always at hand the moment he is wanted.

“Once I had a dresser, who, instead of aiding me, was perpetually in the way. He was like Handy Andy, the clown, without whom no circus in the old days was thought to be complete. He had the valuable knack of seeming to do a lot and doing nothing at all, or, what was still more exasperating, whatever he did I had always to do over again. While he was with me a friend called on me one night in my dressing-room, and, being hospitably inclined, I sent the youth out for a Benedictine. I noticed a shade of doubt on his face as he left, and by the time he came back, my friend had returned to the front of the house. ‘Very sorry, sir, couldn’t get Benedictine,’ he said cheerfully, ‘so I’ve brought you an *Evening News*.’

“Not every dresser is so little versed in man-of-the-world lingo, though. ‘Sorry, I can no longer be your *aide-de-camp*,’ one man said genially, on bidding me good-bye after

he had been in my service a year. His successor, who only stayed with me a week, mumbled, ‘Seems a pity I don’t suit. Personally, I’ve had no fault to find; I’ve enjoyed working for such a clean, sober gentleman.’

“Quite the worst dresser I ever had was an Irishman, who, a few months later, blossomed forth into a leading actor. I sacked him because he got on my nerves and had an unpleasant habit of leaving a map of Ireland on my shirt-front whenever he touched it. The worst having come to the worst, apparently, there was nothing for the poor fellow to do but to tread the boards himself; and he met with so much success that he was soon playing ‘Teddy Payne’s parts on tour!’

“One of the best dressers I have ever had worked for me in New York. The nephew of a baronet, he was an incurable spendthrift and had gone through a large fortune. We parted good friends, and I did not hear from him again, until one night I saw him sitting in the stalls at the ‘Gaiety,’ attired in immaculate evening dress. Later, when he

came round to my dressing-room to see me he told me he had made another fortune, and was then proprietor of a fruit plantation in Florida. Two or three years later, however, the pendulum of his luck had swung back again, and I was a little astonished to receive a letter from him, requesting that if I visited New York again, he might once more become my dresser.

“I need hardly say that, just as no man is a hero to his valet, so no actor is an artist to his dresser. Your fellow-players may be a little kinder in their judgment of your artistic abilities. Yet, they, too, are more likely to think of you as a man first, and an artist afterwards, if artist at all, when they have worked with you behind the scenes for any length of time. He is a very great actor who can sail with his comrades through the rough seas of a theatrical production and still rank to them as an artist at the end of the voyage. By that time, if they have any affectionate regard left for him at all, they will, more probably, like him as a pal rather than reverence him as a god.

“The finest specialist I know in his treatment of people who suffer from an excess of the so-called ‘artistic temperament’ is, undoubtedly, Mr. George Edwardes. Should ‘circumstances over which he has no control’ require it, he has been known to perform the miracle of reducing a man’s salary without his seeming to feel it—such is the soothing effect of his tactful, friendly manner, to say nothing of a big Corona cigar!

“One pleasing trait in ‘the guvnor’s’ character is that he is just as eager to ‘buck up’ an obscure junior as the foremost of his ‘stars.’ I well remember the pains he took to describe the first part he ever gave to me.

“‘It’ll give you a wonderful chance,’ he said.

“‘What sort of a part is it, then, Mr. Edwardes?’ I asked.

“‘Oh, he’s a young man just down from Oxford, who has inherited from his father a million and a half of money. He has a yacht at Southampton, a palatial town-house, a fine place in the country, a château in France, and everything else that mortal man can

wish for. He goes through the South African War and rushes back to go to Monte Carlo, after which he returns to town for the season and then goes to Scotland for the shooting. He's engaged to a girl in India, but, at the same time, he's got himself mixed up with another one in London. He has a lot of trouble over this, and eventually he goes off on a Sunken Treasure Expedition. When he comes back——'

" 'But, excuse me one moment, Mr. Edwardes,' I here interrupted. 'Does he do all this in the play?'

" 'Well, not exactly,' he replied dubiously. 'To tell you the truth, I haven't read the play properly yet; but I think he only comes on at the end of the first act!'

" Our chief, as a rule, is the kindest of men, and I have often thought the reason why he is so deeply loved and esteemed by most of the actors and actresses who work for him, is found in his wonderful gift of sympathy. When he likes to use it, his power of encouraging folk who might otherwise be down-cast has seldom been known to fail.

VAUDEVILLE THEATRE,
STRAND W.C.

May 9 1895

My dear George
Many happy returns
of the day. I am so glad
to hear you are now a
man & responsible for your
life. My congratulations. As a
man, you will require a decent
house. The country, better
than a - can't number of houses
in - . Please accept our
best wishes. Your affec. Uncle
Weldon.

I should have given you a better
one but it was the best that
Blackford had.

28, DORSET SQUARE,
N.W.

May 11th / 95.
(1-30 a.m.)

Dear Old Boy -

Many happy returns of
the day. You are now your own
master, and it is absolutely in
your power to continue to relieve
(as you always have done) the
natural love which has been
so freely and so willingly
bestowed upon you, by an
incomparable mother and by
an admiring and affectionate
father. G. G. Senior.

21ST BIRTHDAY GREETINGS.

“Occasionally, indeed, this intense considerateness for others asserts itself with somewhat incongruous effect. It has been told to me, for instance, that while motoring along a quiet country lane one day, he met an elderly farm labourer, who was struggling with rather more than the usual difficulty to wheel a barrow. ‘Why! what’s the matter with you?’ asked the ‘guvnor,’ pulling up his car. ‘Just a touch o’ the rheumatiz, sor,’ replied the son of toil, shyly.

“At once Mr. Edwardes’s kind heart was touched. ‘I’ve suffered like that myself, and I know what’ll put you right,’ he began encouragingly. ‘You don’t want to go to Aix, or any place like that. You want to get one of those blue electric-light things, and sit holding it to your back for an hour and a half every morning in the bath. Then, cut off all rich food and, *above all, take plenty of Malvern water!*’”

CHAPTER III

LOVE-MAKING—ON THE STAGE

“BUT what is Love anyway?” once asked an inquisitive American who, in his pursuit of the pleasures of the table, had damaged his liver but preserved intact his heart. “But what is it anyway?” And that is just what we have all been seeking to know ever since the world began. Love is the unanswered riddle of the Universe. . . . On the matter of its solution vast armies of ancient poets and modern playwrights have turned their guns in vain. Keats had a futile little shot at it when he wrote :

‘Love in a hut with water and a crust
Is—Love forgive us!—cinders, ashes, dust.
Love in a palace is, perhaps, at last,
More grievous torment than a hermit’s fast.’

Tennyson hit upon a one-line definition which strikes a good deal nearer the mark

when, at the risk of seeming to beg the question, he wrote :

“ Love is love for evermore.”

There we have in one line what many men have taken whole volumes of blank verse and still blanker prose to say. “ It is a mistake,” says George Grossmith, “ to imagine we shall ever be able to discover the beginnings of the malady in a youth or maiden in the same way as farmers can trace the origin of anthrax in a cow.”

It may be, perhaps, because no curiosity holds us in quite such enthralling grip as the curiosity which can never be satisfied that Love is the only meat and drink we will accept from the hands of our long-suffering playwrights. Always at the theatre we demand that Love shall be the staple fare. Even though, occasionally, we allow a play to be built around another theme such as a lust for gold or a craving for wine, always, we insist, as a brilliant onlooker once observed, that “ Eros shall be dragged in by the curls.” And this is all the more remarkable when we

reflect that the most painstaking players seldom make love as we and our neighbours make it in reality.

“On the stage, we expect our lovers to be, before all things, good talkers,” says Grossmith; “otherwise we stigmatise them as poor creatures or fools. Off the stage, on the other hand, we feel there is something wanting in the quality of their love unless they conform to the rule laid down for good little children and are seen, but not heard.

“Woe betide those misguided amorists whose ardour is such that it runs to words! They begin by boring other people and they end by boring themselves. . . . Whoever met in real life an up-to-date English couple who were genuinely and whole-heartedly in love with one another, and, at the same time, could constantly *talk* of the fact? Indeed, when your girl says, ‘Talk to me,’ or ‘Why don’t you tell me something?’ it is the beginning of the end. Love has a language all its own, in which a look is of infinitely greater import than a word.

“When a pair of English folk are in love

in real life it is surprising how silent and absorbed they become in each other's company. Ask any experienced woman of your acquaintance for a frank and free expression of her view, and she will probably tell you that the average member of her sex has small use for the lovelorn swain who uses his gift of the gab at a time when he might be asserting himself in quite another way. An unavoidable glance at certain 'benches in the park' as one goes for an evening stroll in the summer-time, again, soon drives home the conviction that, no matter how they make love in Wales or Ireland, in England and Scotland, at any rate, the course of true love certainly does not run in the direction of light, or even heavy, conversation."

Grossmith has an interesting theory about stage love-making. He is, perhaps, rather daring to assert it, for if it were carried into effect his own occupation would be gone. To present a tolerably true-to-life picture of love as it is in reality, stage love scenes, he argues, would have to be for the most part in dumb-show.

“Every young man knows the choking feeling which assails him in the presence of a girl with whom he is genuinely in love,” he says. “Watch a young ‘blood’ at the Savoy grill-room with a lady from the theatre for whom he has a professed adoration. Nearly always, they are mute. And if, at the end of their silent drive home, he asks: ‘I say, would you mind awfully if I gave you a kiss?’ he is much less likely to get it than if he said nothing.

“Like Mendelssohn’s ‘Spring Song,’ real-life love-making is almost always ‘without words’; and when in love off the stage, actors and actresses, in spite of their stage-training, become quite as bereft of the power of speech as other lovers—that is, if the passion is genuine. Once, when I crossed over to New York in the touring company of a titled actress, two of our number fell madly in love with one another. Although their devotion took the usual inarticulate form, the lovers were to be seen all day long, lolling about with rugs wrapped round them, in affectionate postures on deck. At last their ardour be-

came so apparent that this ultimatum was conveyed to them from headquarters by a tactful ambassador: ‘Her ladyship wishes me to say she does not mind *how* you do it, or *when* you do it, but she does mind *where* you do it.’”

Of the hero and heroine of one of Barrie’s novels, we read: “His eyes proposed to her while he could not say a word, and hers accepted him.” “This being just what usually happens in real life, how then can one hope for a realistic representation of love-making on the stage?” asks Grossmith. He admits that since most of our actresses are peculiarly gifted in the art of making eyes, the business of making love, if conducted on these lines, might prove highly diverting from the standpoint of the boxes and the front row of the stalls. But even so, it would be fated most likely to fall a trifle flat in the dress circle; it would most certainly lead to cries of “Speak up,” followed by general uproar in the gallery, and it would hardly placate the pit.

“So it is that love scenes, to be really effective on the stage, must be silent,” says Gros-

smith. "One of the best interpretations of love on the stage I ever saw was in New York, in a play by Clyde Fitch, in which the idea of a young man and a girl falling in love with one another at first sight was conveyed, without a single word passing between them, in a most impressive pause. . . . Yet another was in Zola's '*La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret*' at the *Odéon* in Paris. During the whole of the second act of this play, which takes place in a forest, there is not a word spoken between the lovers, who chase one another playfully about until they suddenly discover that all things in the forest—the animals, the trees, and the plants—are in pairs and have conspired to make them love. Then come the simple words—the only dialogue in the entire act—'*Je t'aime.*'"

Diderot had a theory that an actor could make love to better advantage on the stage, if he were really in love with the woman with whom he was acting, than off. "Personally, I think just the reverse is the experience of most stage lovers," is Grossmith's view. "The primary function of the actor is, before



Photo by Foulsham & Banfield.

LOVE-MAKING ON THE STAGE.

Miss Phyllis Dare and "Gee-Gee."

all things, to act. Provided he has the true artistic faculty, the actor, like the novelist, is more likely to get better results from relying upon his imagination than from drawing solely upon his own actual experience of life.

“It is curious but true that an actor or actress who strives simply to be himself or herself in a part is usually unconvincing, if not an abject failure. Some years ago an actress had a play specially written for her which served up a love-story that all the world knew to be more or less a slice out of her own past. What was the result? In this impersonation of herself, she failed lamentably to grip the audience in much the same way as Lord Roberts or Lord Kitchener would fail if they were given the chief acting parts in a stirring military drama; or, to take a more vivid illustration, as the volatile Mr. Lloyd George would fail, if he agreed to impersonate himself in ‘Pay up and look pleasant,’ or some other sketch with an equally realistic title, on the ‘halls.’

“When one awakes to the fact that one is, so to speak, acting one’s own self on the

stage, one usually becomes self-conscious and *gauche*. Nearly every actor finds it impossible to be natural on the stage, unless he can fall back to some extent on 'make-believe.' And that is precisely why so many of us are so different on the stage from what we are off. Your heavy tragedian in private life is, sometimes, the lightest-hearted, the merriest of men, the genial friend of every member of the company ; while your light comedian, on the other hand, is, maybe, sour and sullen, a horse of quite another colour. . . . Then, too, men like Oscar Asche, who cut tremendously affrighting figures as swashbucklers and bullies on the stage, are often by their own firesides the shyest and most docile of creatures. . . . The Petruchio of the stage is seldom Petruchio at home. Although the leopard may not change its spots, a lion, quite conceivably, may become a lamb."

And as with the stage-swashbuckler and the stage bully, so with the stage-lover. The man in the audience may surely be forgiven a natural inclination to envy the actor whose business it is to woo and, perhaps, even to

wed some seven or eight times a week a fascinating young woman, who, no matter at which angle of the opera-glasses she be scrutinised, is still enough of a beauty specialist to seem possessed of a vivacity and charm as rare as it is ravishing.

“I bet that lucky beggar makes the most of his opportunities,” a very young uninitiated young man-about-town whispers sagely into the confiding ear of a brother-blood as they sit together in the stalls, and the panorama of love-making unfolds itself before their eyes.

A special licence in love-making is granted to Grossmith when he is on the stage. . . . There, he kisses and makes love to pretty young women, with rather more than average prodigality and also, if we pretend to believe in the plot of the piece, on the strength of an incredibly short acquaintance. Free and easy habits would seem to be the peculiar prerogative of the people one meets in musical comedy. Only in that irresponsible realm can old men and matrons and young men and maidens make love on the slightest provocation, oblivious of time and place. The

scene may be Bond Street at midday, a solicitor's office in late afternoon, a crowded restaurant at midnight, or a farmyard at cock-crow ; but what does it matter ? These gay, blithe folk of musical comedy invariably rise superior to the occasion and show the same gleeful tendency to frolic and frisk into an exhibition of love-making for all the world to see.

Seriously as he takes the art of the musical play, Grossmith is not so serious that he cannot see that love-making of this sort is a caricature rather than the real thing. "But need the ultra-serious critics scoff at it on that account ?" he asks ; "for, after all, who can afford to belittle a caricature which shows up so strikingly the chief points of the original ?

"Every care is taken with the love-scenes in musical comedy all the same," he says. "Quite one of the most natural stage love-scenes I have ever seen was that between Seymour Hicks and Phyllis Dare in 'The Catch of the Season' ; while no one could be more particular than Mr. George Edwardes in the matter of stage love-making.

“ I remember, when ‘ Peggy ’ was produced, Mr. Edwardes changed Miss Dare’s *fiancé* four times. I was *fiancé* No. 1, but he soon banished me from the scene. . . . ‘ You’re not nearly good-looking enough and have no money,’ he told me. ‘ The audience will be sent home with a nasty taste in the mouth if she marries you ! ’ Then a temporary engagement was arranged for ‘ Peggy ’ with an interpolated naval officer, until ultimately Mr. Edwardes decided that, as ‘ Peggy ’ was officially engaged to Mr. Edmund Payne at the beginning of the play, it would alienate the audience if she threw him over at the end ! . . . Then, when ‘ Peggy ’ was sent out to America, it was decided she should marry the villain, the part admirably played in London by Robert Hale.

“ Mr. Edwardes’s theory is that the love-story should be simple and the girl faithful and true. When, in writing ‘ The Spring Chicken,’ I departed from this principle, I got into trouble with the late Mr. W. T. Stead. The Bishop of London allowed himself to side with Mr. Stead without having seen the play,

and he protested to the Lord Chamberlain, who had, however, taken his daughters four times to see it. . . . I would have liked Dr. Ingram to have attended a Saturday *matinée* of that piece—and to have seen the house full of children, screaming with laughter at the antics of Teddy Payne, a comedian who has never been known to offend in his methods either by word or deed. . . . On matters of taste, I am thoroughly convinced, the ‘Gaiety’ audience is the finest censor in the world.”

In talking to enthusiastic young men friends George Grossmith is especially eager to explode any unduly pretty myths that exist about love-making on the stage. “It is about as thrilling an adventure for the average actor to make love in his professional capacity as it is for a schoolboy to kiss his maiden aunt,” he will tell them. “To the man playing ‘juvenile lead,’ making love is part of the day’s work—and not always the most agreeable part, either.” Jokingly, he will relate how one of the most effective love-scenes of his career was that in which, nightly,

for a period of eighteen months, it was his duty to bill and coo over a lady with whom, off the stage, he was barely on speaking terms! In more serious moments, however, he reflects that it is always as well for an actor to contrive, if possible, to be at any rate *bon camarade* with the lady to whom he has, professionally, to make love.

“But as for being in love with her when she is off the stage!” At once he is up in arms at the suggestion. “It seems to me that the men and women who can survive rehearsal after rehearsal of a series of exhausting love-scenes, and still remain in love with one another as private individuals, must be hopelessly infatuated. Such a state of affairs seldom arises; but whenever it does arise, it leads almost inevitably to disaster. Can you think of any worse form of torture than for two people, head over ears in love with one another, to be called up nightly ‘to make love’ to order for the benefit of the man in the street?”

“As a rule, the astute theatre-manager is quick to realise the impossibility of expecting

an actor and actress to do justice to themselves under such conditions. Self-consciousness, jealousy and all the other fiendish concomitants of love quickly creep in to mar the acting of the lovers ; and so it happened not long ago that an actor whose name is a household word in London was dismissed from a cast for no other reason than that a favourite actress was in love with him and had begun to suffer from hysteria and fainting fits in consequence.

“ And here I would say a word about the old-time false notion that used to exist in the public mind regarding the free-and-easy relationships between actors and actresses. This owed its origin to the fact that people never would realise that, behind the scenes on the stage, just as in every other sphere of activity where men and women are thrown together, there must be a certain spirit of free-and-easy *camaraderie*, if any work is to be done. ‘ Weren’t you in the habit of addressing the defendant as Jack, and didn’t he call you Minnie ? ’ counsel sometimes asks the plaintiff in a stage breach of promise case,



"GEE-GEE" AS "THE BELLE OF NEW YORK"
In his Revue, "The Linkman," at the Old "Gaiety."



A VERY CORDIAL ENTENTE.
Madame Réjane and "(ic-ciee)" in the one-act play,
"Madame Attend Monsieur."

By courtesy of *The Tailor*.

when all the world knows that, with stage folk, familiarity of this sort stands for nothing. It is merely akin to the familiarity which exists between one schoolboy and another, or between brother officers who have worked together on a long campaign.

“ Personally, I am glad the old-style mode of a too liberal use of the Christian name is dying out with stage-folk. I detest the ancient type of stage manager who calls all the ladies ‘ dear ’ and all the men ‘ laddie.’ Even though an actress’s place is only the eighth row of the chorus she is still entitled to the prefix ‘ Miss.’

“ But to pretend that these free-and-easy manners are the hallmark of something still more objectionable is absurd. A man who has to meet and, perhaps, to make love to a lady, professionally, night after night, can hardly be expected to greet her in private with some such conventional remark as, ‘ How do you do, Miss Jones. It has been a lovely day, has it not ? ’ What an impossible person he would be if he did !

“ For me, unless they are in the hands of

the greatest artists, the love-scenes of high tragedy are invariably unreal and vastly more amusing than the love-scenes of low comedy. They are so obviously the counterfeit instead of the true coin. 'Laughter is akin to tears' and an actor can never succeed in tragedy if he has no sense of humour. Irving could never have scored his triumphs as a tragedian if he had not been, primarily, a comedian.

"As an example of the failure of tragedy on the stage, take Juliet, the heroine of the world's greatest love-story. We all know that Juliet, ideally portrayed, is a wonderful picture. She is what the critics call 'tragedy personified.' 'Passion emanates from her breast as from a shrine.' But is it often, after all, that she is ideally portrayed? Left in charge of indifferent, or inexperienced, actresses, too many Juliets, I am afraid, step down from the pedestal of their forlorn and lovesick grandeur and appear to be, instead—well, just silly, hysterical school-girls, and middle-aged school-girls at that. The fact is, as my father used to say, no-

body can play Juliet until she is too old for the part.

“ There is, by the way, one little fact about Juliet that to me has always been a bit of a puzzle. I can't quite reconcile how she contrived to prove what one leading critic called ‘ a Moltke of passion, storming one citadel after another ’ when, all the while, we are told, she had not reached her fourteenth birthday ! I took this difficulty to an obtuse male friend of mine and he merely murmured ‘ Extraordinary kid ! ’ I mentioned it to an intelligent middle-aged Englishwoman and she replied : ‘ Oh, well, you see, the girl was an Italian, and so one might expect *almost* anything ! ’ ”

CHAPTER IV

LOVE-MAKING—OFF THE STAGE

“THERE are many old ladies of both sexes who put actors, and, in fact, all other artists, into the same category as this woman friend of mine puts Italians,” adds Grossmith, as our thoughts turn more directly to the subject of love-making as it is, off the stage. “They feel that when folk who are notoriously such ‘queer fish’ fall in or out of love, then one may expect—well, *almost* anything.

“Whereas, in the olden days the British matron fought shy of actors and actresses on the ground that they were abnormally wicked people, she is now more enlightened, and is only too glad to throw open her doors to receive them. Our talented players are now among the most courted members of Society. . . . Still here and there one still

meets women who have not yet been able to cast off the prejudice of their grandparents in this matter.

“At a luncheon-party the other day, my neighbour, a charming American woman, gave me a frank and interesting explanation of why she refused to invite actresses to her house. ‘You see, I am not as young as I once was,’ she confessed, ‘and, since it is the business of actresses to charm, though not necessarily with any design—well, I want to keep my husband.’ I then ventured to inquire—for I too am on the stage—whether I might one day hope for the honour of being among her invited guests. ‘That, of course, is a question for my husband to decide,’ she replied.”

“Love among the artists” and the sins perpetrated by artists in the name of love have been, Grossmith points out, legitimate food for the speculatively inclined for many a long day. Artists are not the only souls to be caught in the net, however. Quite recently, we were privileged to borrow a page from “Love among the Dukes”. . . . The

effect of love on the digestive organs was shown by the Duke of Argyll, when in *Intimate Society Letters of the Eighteenth Century*, he gave to the world the story of the difficulties which beset one Dr. Moore, to whom, in eighteenth century times, fell the responsible if thankless task of training the young Duke of Hamilton. This young man was highly susceptible, constantly falling in love with one lady or another. Dr. Moore watched and analysed his symptoms and thus reported them to his mother :

“ This is the third Passion the Duke has had since we crossed the sea. They generally affect his appetite, and I can make a pretty good guess at the height of his Love by the Victuals he refuses to eat. A slight touch of love puts him immediately from Legumes and all kinds of Jardinage. If it arises a degree higher, he turns up his nose at Fricassés and Ragouts. Another degree, and he will rather go to bed supperless than taste plain Roasted Veal or Poulets of any sort. This is the utmost length his passion has ever come to hitherto, for when he was at the Court

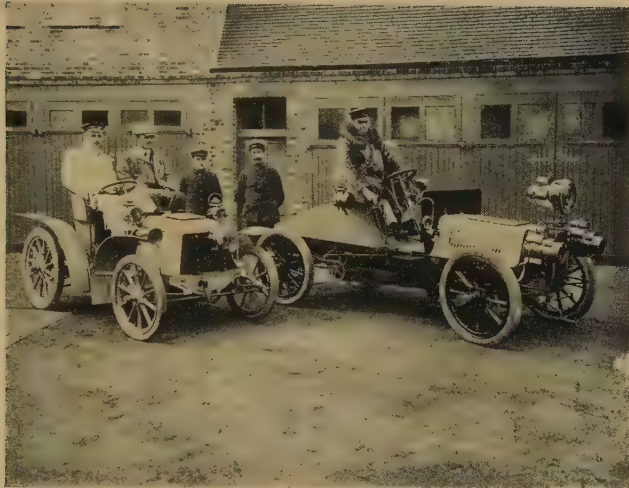
with Mademoiselle Marchenville, though she put him entirely from Greens, Ragouts, and Veal, she made no impression on his Roast Beef or Mutton appetite. He fed plentifully upon those in spite of her charms. I intend to make a thermometer for the Duke's passion with four degrees—1, Greens; 2, Fricassés and Ragouts; 3, Roast Veal and Fowls; 4, Plain Roast Mutton or Beef; and if ever the mercury mounts as high as the last, I shall think the case alarming and inform your Grace."

And so, it is plain that when once we are beneath its insidious spell, Love can quickly make invalids, if not mincemeat of us all, more especially, if we happen to be ducal young men who can afford the luxury of a doctor in constant attendance. Imagine the impudence of this little demon who takes such flagrant liberties with the inner being of a man that it can interfere with that most sacred right, his appetite, and turn him from his food; while, as Grossmith has furthermore noted, it is calculated to have an equally distressing but exactly opposite effect on

his thirst ! Small wonder, then, that love-making is quite as serious an art in real life as it is upon the stage !

“ Off, as on the stage, one meets the man who is constitutionally adapted to love-making,” says Grossmith. “ Just as the coward dies, so the lover who has a natural aptitude for loving—loves many times before his death.”

We all know the man who is “ the Constant Lover ” in the sense that he is constantly in love, although it may be that it is hardly ever for longer than three weeks with the same woman. “ A man of this type has the expensive gift of a connoisseur where love-making is concerned, and unless he is an actor, it is well that he should have private means,” is Grossmith’s discreet comment. “ You see, love-making in his case is more or less a career in itself. If he is an actor, it is, of course, different. . . . An actor, as the result of his professional training, by the way, has an enormous pull over men in all other walks of life, when, off the stage, his ‘ fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love ! ’ My own



EMBRYO MOTORISTS.

The late Capt. Arthur Hill, the late Hon. Chas. Rolls, and "Gee-Gee."



EMBRYO GOLFERS.

Arthur Hatherton, Lawrence Grossmith, H. Lytton, Robert Nainby,
Lionel Mackinder, Rutland Barrington, G. Grossmith, M. R. Morand.

belief is that an actor of average ability—yes, even the plainest of us—could turn a girl from the most fascinating Guardsman in half an hour!

“There is yet another man to whom even the actor must yield the palm in love-making, however, and he is—the musician. Set down the ugliest musician in a drawing-room and let him play anything from Beethoven to Ragtime, and immediately all the women are swarming as thick as flies around him.

“I once heard Maurice Farkoa, that cleverest of drawing-room singers, entertaining a room full of Society women in his own inimitable way with his characteristic love songs—first, a laughing song, then a crying song, then a coughing song, then a sneezing song, and so on. At anything approaching a passionate gasp, Farkoa is, of course, an adept. ‘Isn’t his singing too delightful?’ asked a lady of a choleric old colonel standing near me, as one song followed another. ‘Singing—why, I don’t call that singing!’ was the jealous retort, ‘I call it indigestion!’

“The experienced amorist usually finds it

is folly to play the game of love with the cards on the table," Grossmith goes on to say. "A woman is apt to tire of her lover if he cannot pique her curiosity now and again. He is not much of a lover if he does not cause her, occasionally, to be robbed of her beauty-sleep on his account. As a rule, she has no use for him, if he offers her his devotion as if it were a glass of milk."

Another of the curiosities of human experience, according to Grossmith, is that grand passions are so notoriously excited by surprisingly small themes. How often is the man of giant intellect bewitched by an unattractive young woman who seems just a mass of simpering vapidty in the eyes of other men! And so, although Mr. Shaw is not exactly the genius one would choose to play the part of Good Samaritan in an affair of the heart, there is some truth, after all, in the Shavian maxim which tells us: "Love is a gross exaggeration of the difference between one person and all the rest." Or, as Anatole France has said in one immortal sentence, *La beauté de l'amant n'est qu'au cœur de l'amante.*

Before a man experiences in real life a so-called grand passion he has usually been in love before with somebody else. Romeo, as the folk who split hairs over Shakespeare never tire of telling us, was in love with Rosaline before he met Juliet. It takes, in the case of most men, quite a long time to be—*capable de tout*.

“When the game of love is in full swing, Man is on tenterhooks, while Woman is in clover; but when, at length, the game is played out inevitably the woman pays!” Such is life as almost every woman interprets it for the benefit of us men folk. . . . “But we are fools if we believe any such fairy story,” protests Grossmith. “All of us who are at all versed in affairs of the heart know only too well that between the sexes the spoils of love are fairly evenly divided. The man of amorous propensities who imagines it is about as easy to woo and win a woman as it is to buy a postage-stamp is, indeed, a greenhorn. Some women, like free-soup tickets, are to be had on application, but the woman worth winning is never a woman of this kind. Man

is not the only human being who has mastered the knack of inflicting pain, although Woman is by nature such a grumbling animal that she delights to make him think so.

“ We live in an age of publicity, in which everybody’s love affair is the common property of everybody else ; and when, in another year or two we have Blue books on the number of men and women who are periodically jilted in the course of a year in the British Isles, I would not be one bit surprised if Woman is found to be a good deal more of a jilt than Man.

“ To jilt, of course, is reckoned to be peculiarly a woman’s prerogative. And the pity of it is that not every man knows how to take his beating philosophically. Most of us have met the lover who, once rejected, remains ever afterwards a man of distorted vision. He simply can’t see straight. Sighing for his lost love is henceforth his lifework. He makes such a luxury of his sense of loss that in the end he prizes it unconsciously, even more than he prized his love.

“ That is a powerful story which Paul

Bourget tells, of the young man who brooded so incessantly over the fact that he had been jilted that, although he himself never realised it, he would have been seriously embarrassed if the faithless lady had repented and thrown herself in his arms. For the rest of his life, he was the hero or victim of a comedy, three parts sincere, which he played to himself and his friends. He comforted himself that his liking for alcohol was entirely due to his having been crossed in love; always in Paris, he was to be found in one of two or three 'English bars,' where he got drunk on cocktails and whisky in the company of what the French call 'jockeys' and 'bookmakers.' And so he continued until, by means of gout and dyspepsia, he found his release in death.

"A lover, be he constant or otherwise, should never forget that :

He who loves and rides away
May learn to love another day.

"And should it happen that, instead of riding away, occasionally it is his fate to

be ridden away from, why then, this little bit of philosophy will stand him in just as good stead."

Grossmith's last word on the subject of love-making is that, at its root, the pastime, or should one say, the disease? is much the same among all classes; whatever perceptible difference there may be is merely one of veneer. . . . In its primordial manifestations, love in a hut is not far removed from love in a palace. . . . "I have no sympathy," he says, "with the pampered young bride who said to her ducal husband on the night of the wedding: 'But surely, this exquisite love we feel for one another is not felt by working-class men and women, too. It is much too good for *them*!' "

CHAPTER V

MARRIED LIFE : ON AND OFF THE STAGE

To go to the theatre with Grossmith on one of the rare occasions when he has a night off, and to contrast the married couples one sees on the stage with the married couples one sees in the audience is always to be assured of a reasonable amount of diversion. The fun to be derived from psychological peep-shows of this sort has been found by men and women of introspective mould to make ample amends for the dullness of a play.

Let us suppose that Mr. and Mrs. Harris, an ordinary British couple, as we behold them on the stage of real life, are feeling mightily irritated or—what is even worse—bored with one another. The best way of relieving the tension or the thralldom, as the case may be, is usually for Mr. Harris to suggest, with as

much blandness and geniality as he can command, that he and his good lady should "do a theatre" together.

If the Harris couple are people of means, the process known as "doing a theatre" will include, no doubt, the even greater delight of dining out somewhere beforehand. If they are a characteristically British pair, one might also infer that this opening item of the programme will be reckoned by them as quite the most important part of the whole evening's entertainment. At any rate, Mrs. Harris seems often to display an infinitely greater interest in the restaurant menu than she does in the selection of the particular theatre to which they intend to go.

This haphazard mode of satisfying the play-going instinct must not be, of necessity, condemned. Occasionally, it is true, mistakes are made, and before to-day it has happened that ladies and gentlemen with a taste for theatrical fare of the type of "The Marriage Market," "The Girl on the Film," and "Eightpence a Mile," have found themselves at "Ædipus Rex," "Electra," and the "Hippo-

lytus " of Euripides. But, in the majority of cases, the system produces quite satisfactory results.

Having accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Harris then, so far, let us continue on the psychological path with Grossmith and study them at close quarters, when they are more or less happily ensconced in a theatre, where a play which attempts to present a picture of married life is being staged. The first thought to strike us, after this couple have successfully performed the feat of scrambling over other people's knees to their seats, is that they do not actually cast dull, carking care behind them immediately they set foot in the theatrical edifice. Sometimes, alas! they sit in such gloomy, isolated contrast to the rest of the folk in their midst that they can hardly be considered in the light of a good advertisement for the soothing qualities of the restaurant where they have dined.

The particular form and degree of worry which assails them naturally varies with the price they have paid for their seats. When Mrs. Harris and her husband are sitting in the

stalls and have actually paid cash down for that privilege, Mrs. Harris is probably lost in speculation on the precarious health of her little son, Tom, who lies ill of a whooping-cough at a boarding-school a hundred miles away, while Mr. Harris is buried in conjecture about the cause of a puncture of one of his pet motor-car tyres. When they are sitting in the pit, the thorn in their sides is probably of another variety. There Mr. and Mrs. Harris are making brave, if dreary, efforts to delude each other into the belief that they have *really* paid the doctor and owe nothing to the butcher.

At length the curtain rises, and the interest of both sets of Mr. and Mrs. Harrises becomes gradually riveted on the conjugal woes of other married couples. The problems which baffle the husbands and wives of the stage are not always, let us freely confess, the problems which bestir Mr. and Mrs. Harris. Yet, both of them, as they see and listen, are filled with an unholy dread, half disagreeable, half fascinating, that, some day, they too may be tempted in like manner even as this stage

husband and wife are tempted. You never know !

If the play is by Pinero or some other problem playwright, and the plot centres round a kiss a husband has administered to a governess, Mrs. Harris, as an exemplary lady, may be led, quite conceivably, to wonder whether she has been wise in bringing her husband to see it. Husbands, it cannot be gainsaid, have kissed governesses before in the past, and Mr. Harris has been doubtless dimly conscious of the likelihood of such a happening. But will the emphatic demonstration of such an unseemly proceeding prove to be altogether of lasting benefit to her spouse ?

Anxiety of this kind cuts both ways. Sometimes it is the turn of the wife, and sometimes it is that of the husband, to feel uneasy about the general effects of the presentation of married life on the stage. Twinges of doubt were suffered by at least one husband we know on the moral expediency of having taken his wife to see such a powerful study of female libertinism as Miss Irene Vanbrugh

gave us, a few seasons ago, as the flighty wife in "Mid Channel"—another product from the fertile brain of that irrepressible Pinero.

The trappings of vice in this particular play were encased in a very sumptuous setting. The undesirable young woman and her husband were evidently people of position, endowed with a substantial portion of this world's goods. Apparently they went here, there, and everywhere, moving in a constant social whirl.

And all the while, the real life husband in question, as he watched, was filled with a vague, unspeakable fear lest his own wife, in her notorious love of fine feathers and fine birds, should be carried away by the pomp and glamour of this extraordinarily rapid creature's existence. Of course, he knew and trusted her too well to imagine she would be likely to emulate the antics of a wife who forgot herself so far as to spend the major portion of each day smoking innumerable cigarettes. And yet——? His relief, at any rate, knew no bounds when the horrid creature repented duly the error of her ways and

mustered enough decorum to throw herself out of a balcony window into the street below. Here, then, he thought, was a fine play, the ending of which taught a mighty moral lesson to every woman who went to see it, and would not be lost in its salutary effect, least of all upon his wife.

“ And what do you think of it, dearest ? ” he asked his other self, as they passed out of the theatre.

“ Excellent, excellent,” was the ecstatic reply. “ Quite one of the most moving things I have seen. Weren’t Irene Vanbrugh’s gowns charming ? ”

Grossmith agrees that the husband, who upon taking his wife to see certain Pineric plays falls a prey to doubts and fears in this fashion, is rather a *rara avis*. It requires a good deal more than a piece of stagecraft, however cleverly constructed, to awaken disturbing thoughts in the mind of your average Englishman. His mental balance is generally adjusted on such a comfortable scale that, provided he has been fairly well fed before the performance, the stage presentations of

married life he beholds seldom strike home to him as symbolical of his own domestic affairs. "How very like Jones and his wife!" a man will often be heard to say of an acutely drawn stage picture of connubial misery, when all the while he might say, a great deal more truthfully, "How very like Clara and me!"

The average Englishman nearly always imagines that it is some other fellow and his wife at whom the dramatist is hitting. The average Englishwoman, on the other hand, is more discriminating. She rarely fails to detect her own likeness in the mirror held up to her gaze from the stage, and, in proportion to its accuracy, she shows sometimes, a corresponding measure of resentment.

"Such plays ought not to be staged, I do hope my Billy won't go to see it," one particularly extravagant wife told her friends during the run of "The Thief," at the St. James's. As Billy has more than once stood on the brink of financial ruin through the spendthrift habits of this lady, and the main plot of this play centred round a wife's

extravagance, such solicitous anxiety to keep the gentleman away from the theatre at that period will be the better understood.

Meanwhile, do we find the pictures of husbands and wives as they are reflected for our amusement or benefit on the stage-mirror, at all true to life ?

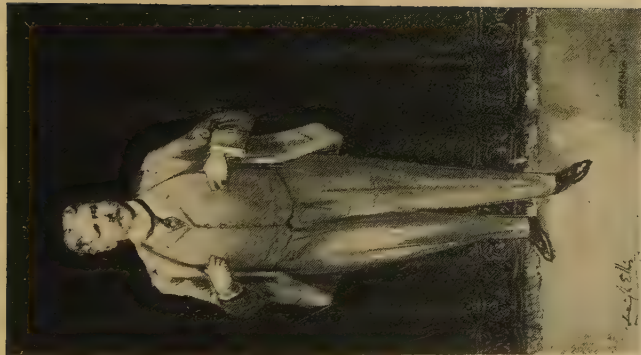
“ I am aghast at the way in which the ninny of a wife, the doll-faced little fool of a woman, invariably comes into her kingdom on the stage,” a married woman of sound common sense once declared. “ She manipulates and manages her husband with a skill and dexterity amounting to genius, whereas, in real life, such a person would make an irretrievable hash of things.” Conversely, married men feel puzzled, sometimes, at the facile manner in which stage-husbands, who have little else to recommend them beyond the immaculate crease of their trousers, are able to carry all before them in the adjustment of a matrimonial quarrel.

Curiously enough, the majority of men and women are different people at the theatre from what they are outside. At the theatre, they



AS LORD BICESTER IN "THE
SUNSHINE GIRL."

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MR. GEORGE EDWARDES.

will often applaud an expression of opinion or sentiment which is quite alien to their habitual point of view. Sympathy with the oppressed does not always endure much beyond the theatre doors. There are women who will shed tears over the matrimonial woes of a couple on the stage, but if a similar domestic tragedy enacted itself between man and wife in their midst in real life, their attitude towards it would not be nearly so sympathetic.

The fact is that most people enjoy seeing at the theatre what they themselves have never experienced in real life. To watch suffering in the abstract provides an agreeable evening's entertainment for many people who are themselves more fortunately placed. For some happily married husbands and wives, plays in which marriage is depicted in its worst possible colours have an indescribable attraction.

And even the unhappily married occasionally find consolation in the same spectacles of matrimonial shipwreck. "At all events, we are not quite so bad as *that*," is the strain in which a couple, on whom the thorn-bit of

marriage has been pressing rather more heavily than usual, will comfort themselves on the way home from a theatre where the seamy side of wedlock has been pictured in the style our grandmothers thought to be so delightfully naughty in the late eighties and the early nineties—a style which, for the liking of present-day audiences, no longer seems naughty enough.

The difference between married life on the stage and married life off may not be so wide as the difference between love-making on and off ; still, it too, is fairly wide. On the stage, if the dramatist knows the tricks of his trade and pays due regard to the exigencies of plot, married life is a series of tensely emotional moments ; off the stage, on the other hand, it is, in too many cases a series of tediously long-drawn-out half-hours. On the stage, if the dramatist would escape the odium of being dubbed decadent, married life must be treated as love's apotheosis ; off the stage, it is more generally believed to be love's anti-climax.

The uxorious Disraeli exclaimed of his

wife, "Why, she's more like a mistress than a wife!" while centuries earlier, Bacon supplied posterity with this definition: "Wives are young men's mistresses, middle-aged men's



"GEE-GEE," AS PICTURED BY SEM, THE CELEBRATED PARISIAN CARICATURIST who writes: *C'est un curieux et long bon homme—qui possède un visage assez grave et des jambes follement gaies.*

companions, and old men's nurses. . . ."

And the ideal wife as defined by Grossmith "is she who contrives from the beginning to the end of her married life to stand in these three capacities to her husband."

"The woman who knows how to be just

these three things to her husband, according to his mood, invariably retains his affections," he says. "You may show him the most beautiful woman on earth and his only reply is: '*J'ai tout ce qu'il faut á la maison. . . .*' A fortunate husband of this kind is seldom happy out of his wife's company. Take him away from her and give him something approximating to a good time and he will probably turn to you and say, 'How Ethel would have enjoyed this!'"

This Chapter is Illustrated by Photographs of Pretty French Colleagues

CHAPTER VI

CONNÜBIAL PHILOSOPHY

BEFORE husband and wife can live together in the spirit of comradeship upon which all the happiest marriages are based, "the wife," says Grossmith, "must be to some extent a philosopher; and to be a philosopher goes much against the grain of the average woman.

"A philosophic outlook is demanded, sometimes, in special degree from an actor's wife. When she is not on the stage herself, it is better for her lasting happiness that she should quickly reconcile herself to the fact that her husband, if he is a capable actor, is almost as much a servant of the public as the priest, and she cannot hope to monopolise as much of his time as she could if she were the wife of a man whose work ran along more stereotyped lines.

“To be happy, an actor’s wife has often, indeed, to exercise the tact and diplomacy of an ambassadress. She realises that her husband belongs to the public as well as to herself, and so she is not too exacting in her demands of him. If she is a sensible woman, she draws a sharp dividing-line between the theatre and the home, realising that her husband is likely to appreciate his home all the more if he can forget all about his work immediately he returns there. Like a politician’s wife, she can help her husband tremendously in his career. . . . But a politician’s wife cannot, and should not, sit beside her husband in the House ; and, similarly, the lay-wife of an actor should not frequent her husband’s dressing-room ; she should rarely, if ever, go behind the scenes.

“And if, here and there, one meets the lay-wife of an actor who has to be philosophical, the same quality is resorted to, occasionally, quite as much by the lay-husband of an actress. Some years ago, a lay-husband of my acquaintance used to exercise it with perfect *sang froid*. His actress-wife had a knack of



Portrait by Lallie Charles.

being absent from home for quite lengthy periods, and, as a rule, he was rather lax in the explanations he demanded from her on her return. But on one occasion she stayed away for a longer period than usual; and this time he determined to cross-examine her more closely. ‘Now, where have you been?’ he asked searchingly. ‘Oh, well, if you really must know,’ was her reply, ‘I have been to Ostend with Captain C——.’ Such an offence, the husband felt, merited a severe rebuke. ‘You have been a very naughty girl,’ he said sternly, ‘and you must promise me never to do it again.’

“Our stage heroines have a way of bringing the house down when, with a world of pathos in their tones, they gently reject the advances of clamorous swains with the words: ‘I’ll be a sister to you.’ But how about a husband who says to his wife three months after the wedding: ‘Never mind, dear, henceforth I’ll be a brother to you!’ Yet that is precisely what that popular French comedian, whose acting at the *Variétés* in Paris was such an unfailing source of delight

to the late King Edward, said to his wife before parting from her recently. The pair were married and divorced within three months! All Paris has since been laughing over the comedy of this record piece of matrimonial hustling: it became, in fact, so much the topic of the hour that a play was staged around the theme.

“At the rehearsals, it was said that no one among the privileged spectators appeared more amused than the little French wife who had just been granted this extraordinarily rapid divorce. But at the *répétition générale* the play appeared to have quite another effect on her. Seated in the stage-box and in full view of the audience, she created considerable stir by giving way to heartrending paroxysms of grief, and thus obtaining much sympathetic *réclame* from the Parisian critics! It may throw more light on the story to add that this lady is herself an actress, and when in Paris I played with her in the *Réjane revue*.

“That every man does not rank as a hero in the sight of his wife, struck home to me one day when I lunched with a certain well-

known giant American comedian, who scored a big hit when he visited London, a man of whom, for identification purposes, I will not say more than that his voice is as big as his body and that his life-story has been well described as 'one continual wedding march.' Imagine my surprise to find that, seated at the same table, apparently on excellent terms with one another, were three ladies, each of whom had been married to the gentleman. The original spouse, in talking to me, waxed tremendously enthusiastic in praise of her husband. 'I guess he's the best host alive,' she told me. 'As a man, he is quite the most delightful I have ever met in all my life, but—as a husband, no, thanks!'

"It is to the credit of Englishwomen to say they would not be so tolerant in such circumstances. In contrast to this almost incredible situation runs the old story of a well-known Victorian actor who, walking down Bond Street with the lady who was *not* his wife, found himself face to face with the lady who *was*: 'I believe you two ladies have a good deal to say to one another, so I think

I'll go,' he said diplomatically, as he beat a hurried retreat.

"A comic note is often lent to the home-life of France by the eternal desire of French husbands to pose as scapegoats. . . . In some of the gayer Parisian seats one constantly meets men who talk as if they had emulated Solomon in the one field of human activity in which that wise king was not, really, very wise. Listening to them, you might pardonably suppose they had wives in every street, whereas, if you troubled to inquire more closely into their domestic happenings, you would probably find them to be the most model of model husbands.

"The ruling spirit in a French household is, as everybody knows, the wife and mother. Frenchwomen manage their husbands so cleverly, without their knowing it, that a Frenchman is rarely what an Englishman would call: 'Julius Cæsar in his own house.' Yet, to hear him talking to male friends of home, when he is away from home, you might think the French husband was Julius Cæsar and Don Juan rolled in one. . . . And in



Portrait by Felix, Paris.

spite of these curious little games of make-believe, whereby they so continually try to hoodwink us, Frenchmen still twit us with 'our British hypocrisy'! Could there be a more flagrant case of the 'pot calling the kettle'?

"There are times, it is true, when an Englishman prefers to wear a mask in order to disguise his real feelings, even though, if he only knew it, as Oscar Wilde once said, 'a mask may tell more than a face.' In England a married man will suffer in silence for a long time before he will openly confess he has been vulnerable enough to fall in love with a woman who is not his wife. But a Frenchman in such a predicament surrenders himself to what he thinks to be his fate at once. The world is soon let into his secret and—what seems inconceivable to an Englishman—his wife is one of the first people to whom he breaks the news.

"The philosophy with which French wives console themselves at such times is, from the English standpoint, amazing. Often a Frenchwoman is as philosophical over the

love-affairs of her husband as she is over those of her son.

“The French, as a matter of fact, have an innate conviction that a husband cannot remain in love with his wife for much longer than six years. At the end of this period, they say, comradeship, inevitably, must take the place of love. And so, if her husband shows a tendency to be attracted by an occasional pretty face, the French wife schools herself into an appearance of not minding it in the least.

“You even meet Frenchwomen who openly discuss together their husbands’ peccadilloes and affect to be amused by them—who are not above arguing that, in these matters, their respective spouses are expert judges and essentially men of good taste. In refreshingly simple language, which might almost have been borrowed from a kindergarten primer, one wife will sometimes say to another: ‘The Marie of your André is not nearly so beautiful and amusing as the Yvonne of my Guilbert’! . . . Last summer a French wife was strolling through the

lounge of a London hotel, when she unexpectedly encountered the lady who had temporarily supplanted her in her husband's affections. 'Oh, and so you're Mademoiselle Peggy,' she said blandly. 'Well, what you can see in him I can't imagine.'

"Englishwomen, of course, are incapable of being philosophers to such an abnormal extent as their French sisters. Where anything that directly bears upon their own individual interests is at stake they can never see straight; they become jealous. They cannot grasp the standpoint of the famous Frenchman who said: 'It is sometimes agreeable to a man to have a jealous wife, for she is always talking of what pleases him.'

"Should an Englishman have been so unfortunate as to have fallen into an *amourette*, he does not run home to tell his wife all about it quite as quickly as a Frenchman would do, therefore. To begin with, he is not such an adept at word embroidery; he has nothing like the same skill in telling a tale. But he prefers to be silent primarily, because he knows that when once the cat is out of the

bag there will be no peace at home. . . . And it is, I think, mainly for his reticence in this respect that the Frenchman dubs him a hypocrite.

“But can a man be fairly charged with hypocrisy because he is silent at such times? And if so, isn’t it better that he should be a hypocrite for half an hour, than that he and his wife should be unhappy, living in an atmosphere of continual distrust—it may be for the rest of their lives?

“And is ‘the British hypocrisy,’ for which the French scoff at us, such a very terrible thing after all? Looked at in the right light, isn’t it possible that in us the vice may be a redeeming virtue—that we are better with than without it? In any case, although my love for French people, places, and things is intense, it is not so blind that I do not see that our cross-Channel neighbours are, all the while, tarred with the same brush. Only, with them, the tar is put on in a different way. Their hypocrisy takes another form.

“What is the difference between an Englishman and a Frenchman? was the riddle



Portrait by Felix, Paris.

served up at dinner one night by a characteristically staid and stay-at-home inhabitant of these islands. 'Oh, that's easily solved,' replied one who has travelled in many lands, steeping himself for so long in the different atmospheres of them all, that he has now almost forgotten to which country he belongs.

Caroline... Caroline...

Le plus grand Succès des dernières années de

Marche Populaire du Compositeur Vincent SCOTTO

Créée en France par Messieurs GEORGEL, MANSUELLE, etc.

En Angleterre par Sir Geo GROSSMITH JUNIOR

En Allemagne par Herr STEIDL

"GREATNESS THRUST UPON" GEE-GEE BY A PARIS POSTER.

'To find the answer, you have only to consider how, in given situations, each will act. An Englishman, should he have arranged to spend the evening with an enchanting little lady, will tell you he is booked to dine with his mother-in-law. Conversely, a Frenchman who, in reality, is on his way to dine with his mother-in-law, will tell you he is just off to keep an appointment with an enchanting little lady.

“And there you have in a nutshell the difference in the hypocrisy of the two races,” adds Grossmith. “In justice to the English stage, I think it may be claimed by the way, that the majority of its leading actors are all respectable married men who go home nightly to their backyards and hencoops in Pont Street or Surbiton as the case may be.

“The Gaiety Theatre, at the moment, boasts a full quota of model husbands, who, so far as I know, contemplate no change in their present domestic arrangements. But even though this is so, I cannot too fiercely contend that the general public has nothing whatever to do with the private life of an actor. Publicity which springs from the prying curiosity which is far too prevalent, nowadays, militates against his value as a public servant in much the same way as a keen sense of disappointment nearly always results when, after admiring the work of a novelist, we see his smug features reproduced in a monthly magazine.

“It is usually a sure sign that a man is happily married if he tells you he is ‘in chains,’ and grumbles continually about the

tyranny of the matrimonial state. The Englishman may be a growler, but he takes care that the things about which he growls are the things about which he feels most secure. He soon ceases to growl openly if he finds he is actually standing on the edge of a precipice. . . . And women have just the same tendency.

“ I did not think it at all strange, therefore, when a happily married woman told me the other evening she was writing a play entitled ‘ Worse than Widowed.’ ‘ This title strikes me as peculiarly apt,’ she added cynically, ‘ because all my female characters are married women ! ’ ”

CHAPTER VII

AN ACTOR'S LOVE-STORY

ON the stage, in this country, the distance from the nuptial chamber to the divorce court is usually represented as the shortest of short cuts. Off the stage, husbands and wives do not rid themselves so lightly of the rags of respectability; they prefer not to lay their woes at the feet of Sir Samuel Evans, if they can find another way out.

“Seek a divorce in haste and you will most likely repent it at leisure,” runs a Grossmith maxim. “The longer I live, the more I see that divorce spells tragedy for the average couple,” he says: “Our national outlook and temperament are such that even the most hardened sinners in this country have an awkward knack of feeling awkward ever afterwards when they have been publicly branded as divorced.

"And the worst part of the tragedy is the desolation and unhappiness which follow the break up of the home. A man may be estranged from his wife, but passionately fond of his daughter; or *vice versa* in the case of a woman and her husband and son. If fond parents part, the family topsyturvydom which results is too ghastly for words.

"Divorce, in my view, should be the last of all possible stratagems resorted to by folk who imagine themselves to be unhappily married. Often, too, the idea that their lost happiness will be regained if they get rid of each other is a sheer delusion. Among the happiest married people I know are two who at one time contemplated divorce and then thought better of it.

"The case of these two is one of those little *tragi-comedies* with which real life abounds. . . . The rift in the love came after they had been married about eight years. Since he is an actor, and since, according to the outside world, which is, as a rule, pretty glib in its judgments, actors are notoriously 'all things to all women,' it is, perhaps, surprising that

there was not trouble earlier. At last it came, however—came in the beautiful and shapely form of a sympathetic young American actress whom the actor at once hailed as his affinity.

“ In confidential moments this actor told his friends how he had at last met his heaven-sent mate, the only woman on earth with the power to make him happy. He even adopted the Frenchman’s expedient of saying something to the same effect to his wife. The news was not cordially received ; and for a time a dissolution of partnership seemed imminent. . . . Then, ‘ Think of the children ’ was the cry raised by a kindly friend. And the actor, who had hitherto been the last word in loving fathers—thought. . . . Fortunately, although he was in love, he was not yet insane. He hit upon a plan that, he felt, might or might not save the situation ; at any rate, it was worth a trial.

“ The next day he explained things to his manager, who was also his friend. ‘ I must leave London,’ he braced himself up to say. ‘ I want an engagement elsewhere. Send me

to New York, Rio de Janeiro, Sydney, Calcutta, Wigan, the Isle of Man—anywhere you please, so long as it is miles away from here.’ A long tour in the United States was promptly arranged for him; and so he parted from both women—his wife and ‘the other one.’

“To his wife he said very little. The relationship between them at his departure was so strained that there seemed of necessity very little to say. To the other woman he said, of course, a great deal. The parting was, apparently, a terrific wrench to both of them; and it was mutually agreed that if, after a separation of nearly a year, they still felt as irresistibly drawn to one another—why, then, a certain marriage would be dissolved, and, in due course, another one would be arranged.

“This actor-friend of mine once tried to describe to me the loneliness of that particular American tour. Being madly in love and with ‘the loved one’ far away, he used deliberately to shun the company of his fellow-actors, wishing for nothing better than to be ‘alone with his thoughts.’ During those long dreary weeks he seemed to live only for the

arrival of his love-letters, outpourings so voluminous that excess postage had invariably to be paid for the privilege of reading them.

“Then one night this love-story ended—ended abruptly and clumsily, as real life love-stories everlastingly do. From the standpoint of a lover who was already a husband and the father of a family, Mrs. Grundy, no doubt, would have said it was as well it ended as it did. Still, the fact that a love-affair is not exactly *comme il faut* does not make disillusionment less hard to bear.

“The scene of the last chapter was a theatrical ‘special’ which was whizzing this touring company from one end of the States to the other. On long journeys, theatrical folk have a way of splitting up into *cliques*, and, having resolutely held aloof from the conviviality of his fellows throughout the tour, our forlorn hero found himself on this occasion paired off with a middle-aged, wealthy American, who, although he was not connected with the company, was travelling by the ‘special’ for choice.

“To pass away the time, the two men fell

LE FIGARO
10 RUE DE LA PAIX

Cher Monsieur
Je vous prie de
m'envoyer
à Mlle Mathilde Dorziat

[Signature]

Cher Monsieur
à Mlle Dorziat
avec mes respects
à Mlle Dorziat

[Signature]
Mlle Dorziat

Cher Monsieur
Je vous prie de
m'envoyer
à Mlle Mathilde Dorziat
à Mlle Dorziat
avec mes respects
à Mlle Dorziat

Cher Monsieur
Je vous prie de
m'envoyer
à Mlle Dorziat
avec mes respects
à Mlle Dorziat

[Signature]
Mlle Dorziat

Cher Monsieur
Je vous prie de
m'envoyer
à Mlle Mathilde Dorziat
à Mlle Dorziat
avec mes respects
à Mlle Dorziat

Cher Monsieur
Je vous prie de
m'envoyer
à Mlle Mathilde Dorziat
à Mlle Dorziat
avec mes respects
à Mlle Dorziat

Cher Monsieur
Je vous prie de
m'envoyer
à Mlle Mathilde Dorziat
à Mlle Dorziat
avec mes respects
à Mlle Dorziat

A PAGE OF AUTOGRAPHS.

Mlle, Gabrielle Dorziat,
Mme. Réjane.

M. de Caillavet,
Mme. Jeanne Graulier,

Mme. de Reszke,
M. Guitry,

to playing *piquet*. As a scoring-card, the middle-aged American absent-mindedly made use of a bulky-looking, heavily-scented letter. The love-sick actor, as he saw it, felt as if he had been shot! He grabbed nervously at his inner pocket. His own last love-letter was safe enough; but all the same, it was identical with this other packet! The handwriting was obviously *her* handwriting, and when the letter was pulled out in order that the envelope might serve all the better for its new purpose, a furtive glance or two, pardonable, perhaps, in the circumstances, showed that certain odd little terms of endearment—he had fondly believed they belonged peculiarly to himself—proved equally serviceable when she was writing to other men! Naturally, the curtain was soon rung down on this actor's romance. A good many years have rolled by since then; and he now seems likely to live happily with his wife and family for the rest of his days.

“Few people will be able, so late in the day, to probe the identity of the chief characters in this little tragi-comedy. Only the

two or three persons who played the parts in it knew anything at all about it. And now it is unlikely that any one else will ever know just 'who was who!' The silence preserved was due, of course, to the traditional reserve of English people in such matters—our British hypocrisy, if you like! And, when you think of the ending, wasn't it better so?"

This Chapter is Illustrated by Photographs of Pretty English Colleagues

CHAPTER VIII

THE LADIES OF "THE GAIETY"

ASKED to write her autobiography, a popular little "Gaiety" actress once replied: "Better leave it to the woman in the stalls! She knows so much more about my pedigree, my pet-dogs, my lovers, and, above all, my exact age than I do."

And, to a superficial observer, it certainly would seem that the worst that can be said of the ladies of the "Gaiety" is that their private lives are—so painfully public. To probe a little nearer the truth, however, is to find that few real facts are known, while many incredible fictions are circulated about the "pasts and presents" of these attractive actresses. Often, too, such an infinite world of romance, to say nothing of a lesser one of mendacity, is thrown over their multifarious

doings that they are credited—or, perhaps, the right word is debited—with having done all sorts of things which, in reality, they have left undone.

What, then, prompts this extraordinary public interest in their personalities? It may be, of course, the sporting desire to spot a potential peeress—the intensely human, speculative fancy that, just as every private soldier notoriously carries a field-marshal's baton in his knapsack, so a certain little girl, who has not yet penetrated beyond the seventh or eighth row of the "Gaiety" chorus, may have something very like a coronet hidden away in the folds of her light and airy garments. But, more generally, the fact that the "Gaiety" actresses can hold their audiences spell-bound, riveting attention and dispelling all shades of boredom for the whole time they are on the stage, is due to a much less artificial cause; it is simply another sign of the natural homage which every beautiful woman contrives to exact—invariably from all men and, occasionally, from other women.

"To those of us who work behind the scenes, there is no more absorbingly interesting speculation than to try to 'back winners' among the different promising girls who come knocking at the doors of the Gaiety Theatre," says Grossmith. And now he hits out gently at the superior persons who refuse to recognise that any good thing can spring from the musical play—least of all, that artistic talent of a high order is demanded from the actor or actress who makes a mark in that branch of the theatrical profession.

"Inevitably, we are bound to refuse quite one half of the recruits who apply to us," he explains. "To 'get on' at 'the Gaiety,' a girl must show signs of being able to sing and dance as well as act, and it might be rather a shock to Sir Arthur Pinero and other critics of the musical play to find how many otherwise competent actresses are sent away from us because they fall short in one of these three essentials. 'I am very sorry, but you are no use to us,' it breaks our manager's heart to tell them. '*I am afraid your only chance is to go in for the "legitimate."*' And so, with

downcast hearts and sad faces, looking pictures of infinite dejection, they turn wearily away to try fortune at the 'St. James's,' the 'Haymarket,' or 'His Majesty's.'"

At the outset of her career, the would-be actress who decides, airily, to select musical comedy as the medium for her talents is faced with her first real difficulty; it all depends on whether musical comedy will select her. Even when the applicants for positions in the "Gaiety" chorus seem eminently suitable, the problem of whether they will realise the expectations formed of them is always largely a gamble. Hence, as Grossmith says, "to deal in futures," where the ladies of the "Gaiety" are concerned, proves quite as uncertain a form of speculation as if we were engaged in more prosaic operations of a similar kind on 'Change in the City.

"All along the line, there are constant surprises," he states. "Hidden away in the inner recesses of the chorus, you come across a girl, it may be, who seems to be dowered with all the attributes which go to the making of 'a star.' Here, at last, you think, is a



Portrait by Rita Martin.

little lady who will one day take the town by storm. She is nimble, vivacious—obviously, you say, possessed of all the requisite gifts.

“A new-comer in the ‘Gaiety’ chorus of this description may seem, at first, to possess altogether unusual talent and charm. She arouses your professional curiosity. You make rash prophecies about her and eagerly wait for her to fulfil them. But, unfortunately, in far too many cases, to cherish hopes that you have made a discovery in this way is to be bitterly disappointed. The beginner may do well at the start. Then, quite unexpectedly, when she is given a chance, she collapses. Her abilities are, perhaps, not versatile enough, her work is hopelessly uneven, and she fails altogether to visualise her part in the way you expected. I remember once a lady-recruit at the ‘Gaiety,’ whose singing-master had prophesied great things of her, was entrusted with eight bars to sing in the Finale of the First Act. Immediately the curtain was rung down, the stage-manager quickly came round to know the reason of ‘the long stage-wait.’ ‘Oh, that wasn’t a stage-wait,’

somebody told him. 'That was Miss So-and-So singing her solo.'

"But, conversely, one meets ladies at the 'Gaiety' who spring surprises of a more pleasant kind. They blossom forth into unexpected successes. There are phenomena around whose careers true and romantic stories might be written, entitled: 'The Triumph of the Ugly Ducklings.'

"I have known cases of girls, gawky and unattractive at first, who, after a year or two in the chorus at the Gaiety, have discovered that most potent secret of the actress—how to charm. The business of charming has not come to them naturally, but they have mastered it by the exercise of their brains and sheer hard work. And an actress who has fought her way through in this fashion is sometimes more efficient, in the end, for stage-purposes, than the actress who is endowed with natural gifts and has seldom made a really serious effort. . . .

"Although, as I have already said, a player is apt to fail, if he is required to be 'just himself' in a part and has not to rely in some

measure on 'make-believe,' I could give many instances, nevertheless, in which, off the stage, the character of an actress has tended to be moulded more and more on the lines of the part she plays—that is to say when she plays it over a long period. Just as the actor gives his personality to a certain part, so, occasionally, a certain part, if continually played, gives in turn its personality to the actor. As night after night of the run goes by, you find he drops, if he is not careful, quite easily into the outlook and habits of the character he plays—a hero or a villain, as the case may be.

"Similarly, an actress of dull and uninspiring features, if she applies herself seriously to play the part of a woman who is supposed to be attractive, often takes unto herself much of the charm that, in the beginning, she lacked ; to be charming becomes a sort of second nature to her, in fact. . . . It is, usually, by personal magnetism rather than by beauty that an actress scores the most heavily. In the old 'Gaiety' days, the moment Nellie Farren made her entrance on the stage, she had only

to give one glance upward, and the whole house was under her sway.

“To be ‘a universal charmer’ or popular idol to the extent accomplished by some of the leading ladies in our musical plays, has always seemed to me to be one of the most difficult careers a woman can pursue. Marie Tempest gave some idea of the years of drudgery and hard work which must be undergone by an actress who serves her apprenticeship to the business of charm, when, as the gay little widow in Arnold Bennett’s play ‘The Honeymoon,’ she said with tremendous conviction, after seating herself in her own inimitable style: ‘It took me exactly seven years to learn how to sit down like that, and, in another seven years, I expect to do it even better.’”

But blighted hopes and, on the other hand, unexpectedly pleasant surprises do not compose the sole experience of the enterprising management whose business it is to discover new talent among the ladies of the “Gaiety,” of course. Happily, there are legions of young actresses who, by coming rapidly to the



front, have realised the great things expected of them at the start.

"A recent happy example of a young actress who has proved a genuine 'winner' is Miss Avice Kelham, now playing a leading part in 'The Marriage Market,' at Daly's. I selected Miss Kelham out of the 'Gaiety' chorus to play the part of the Suffragette who burst in upon Teddy Payne and myself in one of our duets in 'The Sunshine Girl.' Small though this part was, she played it so well that she was chosen, eventually, to succeed Miss Gertie Millar in 'Gipsy Love'; and there is now every sign that she will go from triumph to triumph. . . . Then, Miss Millar herself was marked out for promotion from the time she played the small part of 'First Bridesmaid' in 'The Toreador'—practically from the moment she first came to town; and she has proved herself to be a winner all along the line, ever since.

"Among the supercilious, a silly notion prevails that any tolerably pretty girl can succeed in a musical play, provided she trusts to an innate inanity and a stroke of luck.

The experienced onlooker at the 'Gaiety' is wiser, of course. . . . There, short shrift is soon given to that peculiar type of 'stage-lady' whose sole merit is that she is 'a girl trying to be a woman or a woman trying to be a girl.' Personally, I am always amused when the superior mortals of to-day talk disparagingly of a 'Gaiety' actress in much the same wrongheaded way as their fathers talked of a 'burlesque actress.' From their disdainful tone, one would think that this type of actress had about as much claim to a place in the theatrical sun as—well, shall we say, the kind of actress who figures in the police-courts?

“Yet quite as high a standard of artistic ability is required from the actresses who would shine in a musical play as from those who are the leading lights of the 'legitimate' boards. If you doubt it, you have only to think of how potent is the appeal the most expert of them make to their audience. Invariably they get right there. All who were on the stage at the Coronation Command performance at His Majesty's Theatre felt

the thrill which ran through the house when Gertie Millar and Lily Elsie entered, hand in hand, as the two nieces in Sheridan's 'The Critic.' Applause on such occasions is forbidden, but it was with great difficulty restrained. Even His Serene Highness of Kinemacloo was seen to nudge violently his august cousin of Tootalorum, then slumbering peacefully some four seats away from the King, and, needless to say, both Eastern potentates kept wide awake for the rest of the evening.

"Charles Hawtrey was playing 'Sneer,' while I played 'Dangle.' 'That's got 'em,' he whispered to me, as a distinct murmur of appreciation went up from one of the most distinguished audiences ever assembled, when these two charming ladies came on the scene. Although 'everybody who was anybody' was playing that night, I doubt whether any other two actresses produced a more striking effect."

According to Grossmith, the main difference between the two branches of the profession is that, whereas a comedy only provides scope

for the energies of three ladies, a musical play employs the talents of three score. The best proof of the heavy debt in which the musical play has placed comedy, that sister of hers with the superior air, is shown in the large proportion of "legitimate" leading ladies who have been recruited from the ranks of the one to the other. Many competent actresses, now playing comedy parts in London, were trained in the chorus at the "Gaiety" or "Daly's"—in other words, in the best extant school of English acting; for nowhere else are such pains taken to bring out the player's own personality as at the rehearsals at those theatres.

"It is possible," Grossmith admits, "that some of the girls in our musical plays are daughters of small suburban grocers, like Sir Arthur Pinero's heroine in 'The "Mind-the-Paint" Girl.' But it is also a fact that many of them are ladies of good birth and education who fare considerably better on the salary they receive from the theatre than they would if they were governesses. The important point is that in either case the supreme test



Portrait by Rita Martin.

of a girl's fitness for her work lies in the question of her artistic ability.

"It is a pleasing sign of the improved condition of the stage that the 'chorus girl' of the old school is so quickly passing away. While, as my friend Mr. Ralph Nevill points out, the chorus girls of the 'eighties' were for the most part of plebeian descent, present-day girls of good social position go on the stage with full parental approval, and they are undoubtedly more beautiful, more lady-like, and dressed in better taste than were their predecessors of a generation ago."

The daily day of the modern chorus girl is not an easy one, and, figuratively speaking, like those who stand at the bottom of the ladder in many other spheres, she gets more kicks than ha'pence. She does not go far if she lacks the vital qualities of personality and push.

Still, by the chorus girl of ability who fights her way through, there are many prizes to be won, and while her social status is already very different from what it used to be, she has also the comforting reflection that there is

every sign that, as time goes on, it will become even better.

To-day it can no longer be said of the chorus girl that she is "all things to all men." Since the rôle she plays is essentially a feminine one, sex-attraction inevitably forms some part of her appeal. But, as Grossmith contends, "The spell woven by the pretty woman in the musical play is much the same as that which is exercised by pretty women in all other walks of life.

"The reason why the pretty women of the musical plays attract great attention is because so many of them gather on the stage at one time. Wherever beauty reigns, whether it be behind a bar, in a drawing-room or a type-writing office, at a country-house party or at a Church bazaar, there in its wake will be found men, good, bad, and indifferent—among them, the foolish man, the man with ulterior motives, and the man with a very great brain."

Amid the invitations to supper and various other forms of adulation that are so notoriously showered upon her, the discriminating chorus



A ONE-MINUTE PENCIL SKETCH, CARVED OFF BY CARUSO AFTER
SUPPER IN A PARIS CAFÉ.

girl naturally develops into an accomplished woman of the world. She is habitually as quick to resent a distasteful advance as the majority of her sex, while, as a result of her training, she knows how to reject it a good deal more successfully.

“A great advantage about taking a girl from the ‘Gaiety’ out to supper,” said an ardent young lady’s man recently, “is that she does not waste the first half-hour with all this modern ‘vapourish’ talk about platonic ‘bosh.’ Yet, she knows just how far to go. Take a more unsophisticated maiden as far as Romano’s, and as to what may happen—well, really, you never can tell!”

“Finally, one little word in the ear of the prude, regarding the ‘lady of the chorus,’” adds Grossmith in conclusion on this subject. “Spare your contempt of her because, often, it is so little deserved that, if she is sensible, it passes her by.”

*This Chapter is Illustrated by Photo-
graphs of Pretty American Colleagues*

CHAPTER IX

THE MARRIAGE-MARKET

THE ladies of the "Gaiety" have achieved so much fame, during the past quarter of a century, that they now definitely rank as a national institution—"one of the *most admired* of our national institutions, in fact," a distinguished diplomatist rather sardonically added, the other day. . . . That they have an extraordinarily prepossessing way with them, no ordinary man can deny; and it is a still further subtle tribute to their powers of magnetism and charm that the women-folk of ordinary men are not always moved to such lavish outbursts of praise. Although they hold a deservedly high place in the regard of most women-playgoers, it must be confessed that, in some feminine quarters, occasionally, they challenge such highly coloured criticism that

it might be, conceivably, mistaken for spite.

Shortly after a strikingly handsome Gaiety actress had taken unto herself as a husband a winsome but not too opulent Irish peer, for instance, two prominent Society ladies happened to talk together in Grossmith's hearing of the manner in which the new peeress had acquitted herself while entertaining in Ireland at her husband's country seat. "All things considered, I think she has been a success," was the patronising verdict of one; whereas the other, who had met her out with hounds a few days before, said she carried so much scent that they could not get on to the fox!

Naturally, this little sally quickly went the round of the town. The best commentary on it has come since; for the erstwhile actress about whom it was circulated has fulfilled the duties of her new rank so well that she is to-day one of the most popular hostesses in society, while the kind lady-friend who set it in motion, after being her severest critic, is now happy to be counted among the most devoted, if not the most servile of her satellites.



In the matrimonial mart of Great Britain's aristocracy, the supply of eligible young women is, as all the world knows, considerably in excess of the demand. Naturally, therefore, match-making mothers have not been slow to resent this yearly-increasing propensity of the actresses from the "Gaiety" and other theatres to marry into the peerage.

"I, myself, don't mind it in the least, because they do say that wealthy stockbrokers are just the kindest thing in husbands," a witty young *débutante* remarked to Grossmith, with a wisdom beyond her years, after she had reviewed the difficulties of this latest alarming development in the competitive struggle for husbands. "But, at the same time, I quite understand my mother's annoyance. From time immemorial, there have not been enough budding young peers to go round. A lord as a husband has never been an easy catch, and now that the actresses have 'cornered the coronets,' to try to hook one becomes more and more an impossible task."

Good-natured folk to whom kindness is not an unpractised virtue, then, will refrain from

passing too harsh a judgment on those well-meaning Society matrons who are wont to wax vituperative on the question of whether an actress should not be prevented by Act of Parliament from making such an unwarrantable nuisance of herself as to marry a lord. Like the majority of her sex, the match-making mother is charitably disposed provided she is not checkmated. . . . At the same time, from her standpoint, it must be borne in mind, marriage is, undeniably, first and foremost, a trade—even although she may favour the introduction of a little sentiment as a side-line in the business. Consequently, it is not altogether unnatural if her tongue gets somewhat the better of her in her strictures on actresses as suitable wives.

Such touches of acerbity make the whole world kin. They are merely the result of a deplorable trade-rivalry—the inevitable sequel to that cut-throat competition which is eating the heart out of every commercial enterprise, and, most of all, the commercial enterprise which consists of the finding of husbands for the heavy surplus of marriageable daughters

who cumber the ground in our aristocratic stocks.

Around this topic of "the actressesocracy," as Mr. Jerningham has termed it, much wordy warfare is waged, while, sometimes, amusing arguments are advanced, for and against. "The musical-comedy girls will be the salvation of the aristocracy in this country," is the belief which Sir Arthur Pinero has put into the mouth of one of his male characters. "Just think of them," he then proceeds to expatiate—"keen-witted young women, full of the joy of life, with strong frames, beautiful hair, and healthy, pink gums and big white teeth."

And so on and so on, in the same fanciful what-could-one-hope-for-better? strain. Here, at any rate, is the eugenic view of the situation, and the right-minded section of the community begins to conjure up visions of the wholesale benefits likely to be conferred on posterity by these "actressesocratic" unions. But, alas! voices are soon heard crying in the wilderness, or, to be exact, the Mayfair drawing-rooms, in quite another key.

Owing to this, apparently, incurable habit she has acquired of settling down in the peerage, the actress of the musical play, we are gravely warned, “constitutes a menace to Society”; and a whole string of other uncomplimentary epithets are hurled at her head. She is attacked as the most selfish, superficial, and insincere of creatures. “If we believe in the principle of heredity, her frailties will be, inevitably, handed down to her children,” was the alarmist shriek of one of these drawing-room critics lately. “If such matrimonial alliances do nothing worse than reproduce in the children their mother’s ‘picture-postcard’ smile, an irreparable wrong will be done to our ‘old nobility.’ If——”

“But why proceed further?” asks Grossmith. “Why ruminate on improbable possibilities, when we know what have, hitherto, been the actual results of these marriages? In almost every case they have been love matches; and if you consider it carefully, there is really no reason why love in a castle should not be, ultimately, as happy as love in a cottage. Of course, I admit there are



disadvantages, such as having a retinue of servants perpetually about one—and, also, relations-in-law. But Cupid shakes his small fist at little embarrassments of this sort, and, as a rule, when an actress consents to marry a peer's son—it takes two to drive a bargain, you know, and, sometimes, the lady is wooed but not won!—they do not find it more difficult than any other husband and wife to live ‘happy ever after.’

“Match-making mothers would do well, in short, to wake up to the true facts of the case. In Society, to-day, what profiteth it a man, or woman, either, if he or she hath blood as blue as the Mediterranean in his or her veins but, at the same time, hath not wit and charm? Society shows more and more a tendency to come down to earth. It has adopted the callous, commercial maxim: ‘Get on or get out.’ It gives less and less elbow-space to those shiftless folk whose sole merit is that birth certificates hang as heavily as millstones around their necks.

“And so it is that blue-blooded men who are matrimonially inclined have now a wider

field of selection. Experience proves that the Stage-Girl is no more inane than the Society-Girl, and a husband is not likely to fare any worse for marrying the one than the other. So long as the theatre remains the excellent matrimonial mart it is in this country, so long will the best type of girls be led to go on the stage, and our actresses, no matter whether they be chorus girls or leading ladies, will be less likely to play the parts assigned to them by lurid novelists and playwrights. Indeed, the very fact that these matrimonial prizes now come so easily within their reach makes them think twice before stepping over the border.

“ Having been warned so repeatedly against the dangers of ‘a wife without a smile,’ eligible bachelors in search of wives cannot be seriously blamed if now and again they seek refuge at the Gaiety Theatre—or Debrett’s Matrimonial Agency, as somebody re-christened it. For, as even those who criticise them will admit, the ladies of the ‘Gaiety’ certainly know how to smile.

“ It may be true to say the picture-postcard smile is *part*, but it is absurd to suggest

it is the *whole*, of an actress's stock in trade. . . . One glance at the average lady of the 'Gaiety' stage suffices to show that definite personality is the keynote of her charm. She is not a mere puppet in the show. Some bigoted folk, who have fallen prey to their prejudices, seem inclined to think that the only requirement of a musical-comedy girl is a set of gleaming white teeth made by the dentist specially with a view to the mastication of all the most expensive out-of-season table delicacies.

"Nor does experience show that the 'Gaiety' lady who turns peeress is a fish out of water. Often she develops into a dazzlingly brilliant social success in her new rôle. To be quite frank, I think, as a matter of fact, she is a good deal more fitted, by her training and mode of life, to be the wife of a peer than, let us say, the wife of a country doctor or a subaltern in India. . . . If one could escape seeming invidious, quite an interesting list might be drawn up of 'actressocratic' unions which have been blissfully happy. 'I can never forget the debt I owe to the "Gaiety,"'

a sporting peer who married one of our best-known actresses never tires of telling me, 'and I love to come back.'

"In the face of such satisfactory evidence of wedded happiness, need we trouble much over such minor points as the 'picture post-card' smile? I confess I don't always admire that feature of an actress's make-up—certainly not such cheap reproductions of it as are seen in the illustrated papers and the shop windows. But, generally, I am glad to say the smile of this species exists—solely on the photograph.

"The smile which is the genuine article, and is seen playing about the lips of a pretty actress in real life, unspoilt by the artifice of the camera, is of an altogether different kind; and, really, I find it almost as charming as if I were—well, a mere man in the audience instead of an actor who knows something of how such smiles can be made 'to come on' and—'come off.' And incidentally, to relapse into Irish, isn't it a far, far better thing for a woman to have a smile that will come off rather than one that will never come on?"



CHAPTER X

ON GOING-TO-THE-DEVIL

GOING-TO-THE-DEVIL is a journey upon which nearly all the shufflers on this mortal coil are prone to set forth at some time or other. Some, unhappily, go the whole way ; others, happily, don't. Having arrived at their destination, some manage, with the exercise of a good deal of spiritual dexterity, to obtain return tickets ; others, again, don't. The mode of travel on the outward journey is decided, partly by the temperament of the individual and partly by the circumstances in which he is placed. Some take the journey in easy stages ; others accomplish it at full tilt in dashing, headlong style.

“ I suppose the question of whether a man goes the whole way, or whether he doesn't, will always remain more or less a matter of

personal standpoint," says Grossmith. "One distinguished actor I know was felt to have gone more than half-way when he first went on the stage. He was immediately 'cut off' by his own and his wife's people. Time brought its revenge, for he ended up by keeping the whole lot.

"A man may mix with one set of people and find he is still reckoned to be on the side of the angels, although, in the judgment of another set, he would be considered to have kicked over the traces long ago. On the same principle, discovery of exactly the same faults in a child will turn one parent white with rage, another pink with shame, and yet another apoplectic with mirth. Only the other day a bricklayer was reported in the papers to have said that his twenty-one-year old son had not yet proved himself a man because he had never been drunk, while conversely there is the case of a working-class woman who felt her son was going to the dogs because he had bought himself a pair of brown boots."

On this difficult and highly debatable point as to whether a child really has, or has not,

gone to the devil, then, how can a poor parent decide—how can he muster enough discrimination to throw in a casting vote? The plan adopted by George Grossmith Senior was, on the whole, sound. “I shall never blame any child of mine,” he used to say, “for doing anything I ever did myself.”

The difference of standpoint about what is right and what is wrong was well shown by Henry James in his brilliant novel, “The American,” the hero of which writes from Paris :

“In the course of my travels I met a Unitarian Minister from Boston who very soon demanded a separation for incompatibility of temper. He told me I was low-minded, immoral, a devotee of ‘art for art,’ whatever that is: all of which greatly afflicted me. But shortly afterwards I met an Englishman with whom I struck up an acquaintance which seemed at first to promise well—a very bright man who writes in the London papers and knows Paris. We knocked about for a week together, but he very soon gave me up in disgust. I was too virtuous by half; I was

too stern a moralist. He told me in a friendly way that I was cursed with a conscience; that I judged things like a Methodist and talked about them like an old lady. This was rather bewildering. Which of my two critics was I to believe? "

Whether we have been good or bad, we are only human, no doubt, if we fall a prey to a sense of our own importance in either case. Grossmith tells a story—it may have been of himself—which is another evidence of the way in which a man's vices, like his virtues, are apt to swell to an unwieldy size in his own eyes. Heavily burdened with the feeling of sin, a young "blood" once plucked up courage to make his Easter confession. After rolling forth what he believed to be the worst roll of crime on record in his Father-Confessor's ear, he waited anxiously for the response. There was a long pause; then came the query in a tired tone—"And did you eat meat on Friday?" Another story in the same vein is that of the man who went to confession to reveal the dread fact that he had committed murder. He, too,

waited in fear and trembling until a listless voice replied : " Yes, and how many times ? "

Too many stern and unbending moralists, according to Grossmith, are like the narrow-minded set of Christians for whom, Arnold Bennett has said, life holds no more complexities than a simple addition sum. A revivalist preacher once based one of his most effective sermons on the impromptu text : " Right is right and wrong is wrong. There is no betwixt and between." An elderly lady who sat under him was so impressed with these words that she even had them engraved on her family porridge-basins so that all who ate might read.

" Such a doctrine is all right so far as it goes," says Grossmith. " The awkward part of it is that as soon as you are up against life, you find it does not go far enough. No doubt it would be admirable if the earth were peopled exclusively by elderly ladies, whose temptations were reduced to a minimum, but since, in this ordinary workaday world, passion is just as rife as prejudice, I think it draws altogether too sharp a dividing line between

the good and the bad. . . . Your milk-and-water saint is very short-sighted if he does not realise that the human scheme of things runs in curves rather than in straight lines, and I, for one, fail to see how he can ever hope to accomplish anything if he lives in a perpetual state of throwing up his hands in shocked amaze at the wickedness he sees around him.

“ Have you never been struck by the curious tendency, among some religious enthusiasts, to take the devil’s name in vain ? While it is obvious that any one man who is appealing to the masses drives his point home with more telling effect when he speaks in a free-and-easy style, familiar to his hearers, it sounds a little odd, all the same, to hear the devil both talked and sung of in public places as though he were—well, if not your brother, at any rate your next-door neighbour. One Sunday evening in the East End, years ago, passing a street-corner where an open-air meeting was being held, I must confess I was rather startled to hear the words—

‘ The devil and me, we don’t agree,’

sung, with due fervour, to the usual accompaniment of a harmonium, a concertina, and a cornet, as the first line of the chorus of a hymn ! When I expressed my surprise at this to a friend who at the time was chaplain in one of the London hospitals, he told me that hymns, like comic songs, are not only invented, but sometimes they are even altered to suit the taste of the slum-dweller. In one district where he had worked, doggerel took the place of poetry in the beautiful hymn, ‘ Art thou weary, art thou languid ? ’ for example. No matter how he tried to check the tendency, the favourite rendering at open-air meetings was nearly always—

‘ Art thou weary ?
Ditto languid ?
Ditto sore distressed ? ’

“ And this reminds me of an experience which befell me a few seasons ago. It happened when that popular ditty, ‘ Yip-I-Addy ’ was at the height of its fame. I confess I was feeling a little bored with the tune—all the more so, perhaps, because I had been the first to perpetrate it, and it was

partly to recover from the strain of singing it, nightly, that I was spending Sunday at Westcliff-on-Sea. But even there I could not escape from it, for, quite unexpectedly, it burst forth from the direction of a Children's Musical Service which was in full swing on the sands. At first, I thought the refrain was haunting me so much that I had begun to suffer from what are classically termed 'delusions.' Hurrying to the spot, however, I was just in time to hear the vigorous revivalist call out: 'And now, children, one more good chorus to the same tune from all who are on the Lord's side:

"We're all going to heaven,
Hurray, Hurray!"'

"Needless to say, I no longer felt tired of 'Yip-I-Addy-I-Ay.' The self-confidence with which it was sung in its new form had completely refreshed me.

"But to return to His Satanic Majesty: It is interesting to note that he proves a handy man for reference in the case of many other people as well as the preachers who

MR. GEORGE CROSSSMITH, JUNIOR

DAVID
WILSON



By courtesy of *The Tailor*.

“EVERYBODY’S AWFULLY GOOD TO ME.”

work in the slums, and among children. . . . Occasionally, Puritanical folk make such glib use of his name that they become hoist with their own petard. One evening, a Nonconformist minister greeted in stony silence a daughter who returned home rather later than usual. 'Good-night, child of the devil,' he called after her, as she went upstairs to bed. 'Good-night, father,' came her ready reply.

"As often as not, too, the devil is painted in such a desperately wicked but, at the same time, dazzlingly alluring light by these patterns of propriety that you are tempted to conclude that any one who tries to seek him out will only be yielding to the instinct of a very natural curiosity. My own impression is that some young people would never dream of going to the devil if they were not so constantly warned against going. A word of spiritual advice is useful, no doubt, if it be given in season. But a very little of it goes a long way, and too much of it has a distinctly harmful effect."

The devil's travel-agents, in fact, abound. They are found in the most unlikely places ;

and, often, they prove to be the most unlikely people.

“Has it never occurred to you,” Grossmith asks, “that one of the devil’s most powerful advocates is, all unconsciously, a certain kind of saint? The kind of saint I mean is he, or it may be she, who points out to young people the way to heaven with such grim, Puritanical zest that, inevitably, if they are normal, full-blooded human beings, they feel they would far rather go forthwith to the place which is in just the reverse direction.

“I can’t help thinking this kind of saint breeds sinners much more quickly than the most thorough-going sinner alive. . . . And, by the way, that may be why the alleged daughters of clergymen gain such an unenviable reputation. There is even a case on record of a lady who seriously thought of bringing an action for slander simply because some one had reproached her with being ‘a clergyman’s daughter’! . . . Consider such points for a while carefully, and you begin to wonder whether, after all, a friend of mine, who is a shrewd observer

of men and affairs, is very far wrong when he contends that to spend much time in the society of a certain section of ' God's good folk ' is inevitably to be driven into the arms of the devil's bad ones."

The so-called " good folk " whose influence Grossmith believes to be so baneful are those of the " unco' guid " variety—the folk whose piety has been swallowed in such large doses that it exudes and bristles from them like the hide of a hedgehog. Or, to give Grossmith the benefit of his own metaphor: " It is worse than useless for a man to appear pious if his piety hangs round him like a wet-blanket. Piety, *qua* piety, always revolts, as a lawyer would say. . . . Place a youth of average instincts in such a man's charge and, even if the boy does not actually go to the devil, you may depend on it there will be fireworks; something is bound to happen."

Just what does happen most of us know. Much silent but heartfelt sympathy was felt by the friends of one of the most distinguished philanthropists of the past century when it became known that his only son had, figura-

tively speaking, gone to the devil. Precisely which route the youth had taken, few people bothered to inquire. It was enough to know that, in the eyes of his father, he had arrived there. Henceforth, he was branded as a black sheep. Naturally, the majority of right-minded persons outside his immediate family circle did not feel at all sorry for him, but they felt profoundly sorry for his father.

In the inner family circle of the black sheep, however, another feeling prevailed. Away from his home the head of the house was widely known for his beneficence; when he was not taking the chair at the annual meetings of Societies for the propagation of This, or the Suppression of That, you could always be sure he was busy with some other scheme for the betterment of mankind. Within his home, albeit, the philanthropist cut rather a different figure. There, his children, and even his wife, were inclined to regard him more or less as a dehumanised specimen of humanity; all that they seemed really to know of him was that he was "gey ill to live wi'." His trouble was that he had no lighter side. He

was indifferent to music, to pictures, to poetry, and to the theatre. He prided himself that he had never read a novel. He was, undoubtedly, a man of massive brain, and, if he had been a Cabinet Minister, it was quite possible he would have known how to handle a national crisis. But he did not know how to fondle a child.

Even when, in his youth, he fell in love—the surprising part of it was that he ever fell in love—he was still the same imperturbable heavysides. His love letters, the lady who received them has been heard to lament, were for the most part formal business documents, with about as much of human interest in them as might be extracted from a merchant's bill-of-lading. Nor, in extenuation of the fact that he knew nothing of a woman's ways, could it be said of him that he was in any-degree a "man's man." He disliked open-air pursuits and had no use for sport. The clubable spirit had been wholly withheld from him. Although a wealthy man, he never joined a week-end house party, and he hated to dine or sup in a restaurant. He never

gossiped, never smoked, and rarely drank. . . . He was a pattern of all the virtues except that, like the little Scotch girl, Maggie, in "What Every Woman Knows," he "had nae charm"; and so, according to one who claims to know, his high-spirited young son was sent rapidly to the devil through sheer force of contrast. The youth's downfall was really the climax in the reactionary effect his father's personality had exercised upon him from his infancy.

Practically from the time they had formed a speaking acquaintance, father and son had been estranged. Apparently, the youngster had been definitely recognised as a possible disciple of the devil ever since that early period when he had played the old-time trick of running away after ringing the front-door bells of all the people who lived in the same London square as his parents. And a small boy is in many ways like a grown man: when he gets the reputation of being a bit of a rake he feels he has, perforce, to live up to it.

"The misfortune of many saintly people, it

seems to me," says Grossmith, "is that they set themselves on a pedestal so high over the rest of their fellow-men that the ordinary mortal can't get anywhere near them, and so their influence is lost. It is futile for a man or woman to wear what is called the 'white flower of a blameless life,' if, like the philanthropist father of this young man who went to the devil, they wear it so obtrusively that every one round them is revolted. The 'white flower,' if worn in this way, has the same effect as the gardenia; one cannot remain long in the same room with it. Personally, I am inclined to think if a man is out to do good he will succeed best if he does it by stealth."

Talking in this strain, Grossmith does not mean to infer, of course, that virtue sends folk to the devil. "It is not virtue, but the excess of it, which brings about that end," he adds. "I don't say, because a man or woman is virtuous, he or she must of necessity be dull. Yet it is a bit of an irony that the man who is 'a dead wrong 'un' often possesses just the one vital spark of personal

magnetism which another man, who is in all other respects a thoroughly good fellow, most painfully lacks. . . .

“ And that is why adventurers, until they are found out, are nearly always attractive people to meet. . . . ‘ But why did a seemingly sensible man like you let the defendant obtain possession of all your money ? ’ was a question put to the plaintiff during the hearing of a big financial lawsuit. ‘ Well, you see, Mr. B. had such a charming manner,’ was the reply. ‘ He seemed so open and frank ; I would have trusted him with untold gold.’ And, except that we are all apt to be reticent when we have been thus fooled, I suspect that many other real-life stories might be told in the same style.

“ But although nine out of every ten rogues may be fascinating fellows, the saint may cherish unto himself this conviction, endorsed as it is by every well-seasoned man of the world. Dullness is not, in reality, a matter of vice or virtue, nor, as a characteristic, is it peculiar to any one person. In contrast to many dull and dreary come-

dians, one meets many bright and breezy divines.

“There are many ‘latter-day saints’ of broad outlook who are deeply in sympathy with the struggles and strivings of their fellow-men. One of the largest-hearted of them is my friend Father Bernard Vaughan. Few men have such a quick and ready sense of humour. ‘Aren’t you speaking at the Pan-Anglican Congress?’ his reverence was once asked. ‘No, and for two reasons,’ was the reply. ‘First, I wasn’t invited. Secondly, I could not very well have mentioned the Church without mentioning Peter too, and then it might have become a Peter-Pan-Anglican Congress.’ . . . On another occasion, a Guild for Catholic Actors and Musicians had been formed, and Father Vaughan kindly called on the secretary to offer his services as chaplain. He was told, however, a chaplain would not be required. ‘Well, then, I’ll provide you with a patron saint,’ was his cheery response. ‘You could not find a better than—*St. John Dam-a-sene!*’

“I only know one man who is duller than

your dull saint, and he is your dull sinner,” reflects Grossmith. “Meanwhile, the best antidote to ‘going-to-the-devil’ is a sense of humour or—to put it in one word—gaiety!”

CHAPTER XI

AN APPRECIATION OF THE "BLOOD"

"YOUTH, like murder, will out; and there must be times when every young man worthy the name 'sees red.' To be gay is the rational impulse of all who are healthy-minded, full-blooded, and young. I have no patience with the type of youth who strives to smother this impulse—who is full of schemes for the moral reformation of the universe before he is twenty-five, and, sometimes, before he is fifteen."

Such is Grossmith's dictum, in a chat about the way of life of that interesting species of the human animal, the young man-about-town, who nowadays is called "a blood." On this subject Grossmith is, of course, a foremost authority. It is in the *rôle* of a "blood" that the British public delights

to honour him, invariably giving him short shrift if he dares to appear before the foot-lights in more serious guise.

The "blood," as Grossmith pictures him for us on the stage, is an Apostle of Gaiety, if ever there was one. "Be gay, kind friends, and let who can be clever," would seem to be the way in which a certain maxim, generally applied to maidens, has been twisted to suit his own peculiar case by this dapper, happy-go-lucky young man who steps forth so blithely from the Grossmith bandbox. Whether a spark of wondrous fellow-feeling is stirred within the manly breasts of the gilded youths who so notoriously frequent the Gaiety Theatre, when the immaculate Grossmith flits across the stage in his delightfully nonchalant, characteristically feather-brained vein—well, that is a delicate subject into which I dare not probe. An infinitely more patent fact is that his phenomenal inanity casts an almost equally hilarious spell over all sections of his audience, from Cabinet Ministers and high financiers to country parsons and costermongers, from the *blasé*-est of *flâneurs* to the

rosiest-cheeked of schoolboys. Women playgoers, too, find in him a never-ending source of diversion.

Talking with Grossmith, off the stage, one expects, perhaps, to be treated to a cold and cynical analysis of the weaker points of the " blood." Since he has worked for so long as an artist on the many widely-varying lights and shades of the young man's personality, who is likely to provide a more amusing catalogue of his manifold sins and wickednesses? So one may be inclined at first to reason. . . . But Grossmith is a staunch champion, rather than a severe critic, of the cause of the " blood."

" The more I see of him, the more I like him," he says. " Of course, I know that to rail against the ' blood ' is the last resort of prudish minds. If you listen to all you hear of him in certain quarters, and have never met a real live ' blood ' for yourself, you, naturally, think of him as a young man who is at once selfish, heartless, and dissolute—the living embodiment of all degeneracy, if not quite the most callously

wicked mortal who ever walked God's earth.

"But those of us who know the 'blood' know, too, that there is rarely anything abnormal about him. He is neither abnormally good nor abnormally bad—neither abnormally wise nor abnormally foolish. He is, on the contrary, the most normal young man one could hope to meet. And the instinct for gaiety he so exuberantly follows is merely the ordinary instinct of youth.

"Whatever else may be said of the 'blood,' he is certainly not a hypocrite. He is frankly out to enjoy himself, and it is, at any rate, to be counted among his virtues that he does not seek to hide the fact. . . . The pursuit of pleasure is, admittedly, his supreme *métier*; but need we blame him on that account? For have not the vast majority of us, whoever we be—millionaires, organ-grinders, professional tipsters, or amateur Psalmodyists—just as keen eyes for the main chance, where our material happiness is concerned?

"The way in which the 'blood' solves the problem of how to be happy may not be every-

body's way of solving it. But he has, at least, the courage to show his hand. He candidly admits that he is out for a good time.

" And if we look at facts as they really are, how can a young man, who has the good luck to start life with a heavy purse and a light heart, be better employed than by worshipping at the shrine of Gaiety until he is called upon to tackle more serious things? Conventional moralists, who are full of quack cures for social ills, are fond of prescribing big doses of hard work as the best possible tonic for young people; but while this advice is good in theory, it should not be too strictly followed in practice. If you work a young man so hard that he never has time to follow the natural inclination 'to be young for an hour or two,' as Kipling might say, you may be quite sure there will be disastrous results. Of all freaks of humanity, the old-head-on-young-shoulders specimen is quite the most pathetic.

" In the life of the average man, it seems to me, there is always a probationary stage—a period during which he has more or less to

mark time before he can hope definitely to make good. . . . Miss Mary Garden, the well-known American singer, expressed somewhat the same idea, the other day, when she said the ideal age was forty for a man and thirty-five for a woman. 'Having reached the age of thirty-five, a woman should stick there until the end,' she said. 'How can she do this? Why, just by thinking it. . . . But with a man it is different. A man should rush along as quickly as possible to get to his more mature manhood at forty. Even his thirties are a preparatory school for life, and under thirty he is just as much a nuisance and a pleasure as young growing animals—colts, calves, and puppies.'

"In the race for life, the starters who prove to be winners in the end are more often gay and light-hearted than grave and over-anxious. Beware of the young man who is everlastingly struggling to reach 'Sister Mary Jane's top-note' in everything he does, who has no sense of proportion and will even address a newspaper wrapper as if he were signing a death-warrant! He has a knack of



By courtesy of *The World*.

A CARTOON BY "SPY."

'going up rocket and coming down stick'; when faced with a real crisis, he is almost certain to lose his head.

"Needl'es to say, the 'blood' is not a young man of that sort. His main fault is, indeed, that he is too apt to fly to the other extreme. Just as he never looks for trouble, so he does not deliberately look for work. Gaiety pulls the strings of life, as he views it at the moment, and he is determined to dance and make merry at her bidding for so long as he can. . . . Still, he is never a thorough-going 'blood' unless he is a man of spirit, and as soon as he sees there is something really vital at hand to be done, he is usually quick to respond."

Lord Charles Beresford once said that the man who is a scallywag, and in his leisure may seem to be a waster, almost invariably makes the best sailor—he is always first in danger and last out of it. Sir Herbert Tree waxed still more eloquent in his defence when a journalist remarked to him on his fondness for playing wasters, such as D'Artagnan in "The Three Musketeers" and Derek Arden

in that spectacular play which was not so fortunate as its name implied—"The Happy Island." "To me, the waster stands as one of the great forces of the Empire," he went so far as to say; "it is in him that the spirit of the Elizabethan gentleman-adventurer survives most vigorously. . . . Why is a waster so popular? I am quite sure there is more joy over one waster—whether he repents or not—than there is over a thousand respectable elder sons. . . . The waster, when once he is aroused to action, is often in the end the best possible leader of a forlorn cause. He proves himself a man of infinitely greater originality and resource; he is not turned out of tins; he is not the outcome of the barrack-square."

It is only fair to Sir Herbert to note, however, that he was careful to add that before any good could be done with a young man of this sort, you must first "get him out of London, away from the 'best,' who start the day with a cocktail and end it with a pot of red paint."

"Personally, I don't believe London has such a baneful influence on her young-men-

about-town as all that," says Grossmith. "I don't see why they should not be just as good fellows here as in Timbuctoo. . . . But while I don't mean to imply that a 'blood' is, necessarily, a waster, nor a waster a 'blood,' I, too, am sure that, provided he gets his teeth into a job, either in London or anywhere else, the 'blood' is as keen an enthusiast at work as at play. In so far as there is nothing of the atmosphere of the silent study about him, he may not be a thinker, in the academic sense of the term, but he is a man of action; and the man of action, surely, plays just as big a part in the national scheme of things as the recluse or thinker.

"Almost always the 'blood' is a man of sound physique. He is a patriot, and when the occasion demands it, he turns his patriotism to good account.

"At the time of the South African War every Englishman felt proud of the fact that the recruits enlisted for active service came in almost equal numbers from all sections of the people. All classes were represented, and the 'blood' by no means lagged behind. The

only individual I met who did not scruple to show that, if called upon, he would be at all loth to fight was, I am sorry to say, a member of my own profession. 'No, thank you, laddie,' he said, when somebody recalled the exploits of Robert Loraine, George Barrett, and other actors in fighting for their country, and sounded him on the subject of going out to the front. 'No, thank you, I know what it means. You go all that way to get shot in the back and have your name spelt wrong in *The Era*!'

"It cannot be denied that 'clothes make the "blood,"' to some extent. But not altogether. To be popular, he must carry with him some other passport. No matter in what social set he may move, a very poor time is generally the fate of the coxcomb or bore, whose sole merit is that he knows how to put on his clothes and to excel in the art of 'being good at the stud.' He cannot hope to found a lasting reputation as a 'blood,' unless he has other qualities as well. The fame of Beau Brummell has not endured throughout the centuries solely because he made a hobby of

changing his clothes some fourteen times a day and ordered dinners at £60 a head.

"And even though the problem of what he shall put on and wherewithal he shall be clothed is considered to-day by the young men, almost as much as by the young women in Society, why need this be a reproach? To take a pride in one's clothes does not mean, of necessity, that one is lacking in virility. If it betrays lack of stamina to dress well, why is a soldier put in the cells because he has not pipeclayed his belt? Any one who has anything to do with thoroughbred horses, again, must have marked the infinite care with which they are groomed. Surely, then, what is good enough for a horse is not too good for a man!

"The man who is slovenly in his dress and appearance strikes me as deficient in proper pride and self-respect; and it is hardly surprising if he is given the cold shoulder. An architect friend of mine once complained to me that he could get no commissions. But, since he habitually looked like a coal-heaver, what else could he expect? People are not

likely to entrust the designing of their houses to men who can't design their own persons. 'Will you let me build for you a neat little cottage?' this architect once asked my father. 'Yes,' he replied, 'as soon as you can build for yourself a neat little appearance.'

" 'Never marry a man with baggy trousers, girls,' I constantly tell my lady colleagues at the 'Gaiety,' and I believe there is sound common sense in the advice. . . . Looks are, occasionally, deceptive, but why may not a well-groomed person be symbolical of a well-ordered mind? Your true 'blood' is never slovenly. He is invariably well turned out, neatly and unobtrusively, of course—not in the exaggerated fashion of the 'K-nut'—another vastly different type of young-man-about-town with whom he is too often confounded. And as a rule, in their innermost hearts, his relatives and friends are mightily proud of him.

"My own belief is that all Englishmen are 'bloods' at heart—yes, even when they happen to be curates in person. Some men, it is true, are temperamentally unfitted for the

part from their cradles. They are born with a kink in their natures through which, try as they will, they cannot hope to be 'bloods.' But rest assured they would if they could. For even the most unkempt, the baggiest-trouserred man alive, has felt, at some time or other, a secret longing to be spick and span, to cut a dash with no half-measures in the gay, whole-hearted fashion of the 'blood.' "

CHAPTER XII

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A "BLOOD" AND A "NUT"

THE "blood," through the flight of ages, has been known by many different names, and, doubtless, many more will be invented for him before, in the process of evolution, his type becomes extinct.

In Shakespeare's day, he who is now universally hailed as a "blood" was known as a gallant. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, he lived as a buck or a blade, although the term "blood" was freely used in order to signify what old dictionaries define as 'a rake, or a high-spirited fellow'; and, at intermittent periods, a host of other names have been bestowed upon him. In the far-distant past, he responded to such fantastic appellations as a dandy, a beau, a coxcomb,



Photo by Foulsham & Banfield.

A "BLOOD."



Photo by Ellis & Walry.

A "NUT."

a rattle, an elegant, a pretty fellow, a Macaroni, and a merrie-grig. Then within living memory, he—or, at any rate, the young man who, nowadays, is recognised as a "nut," which, being interpreted, is "almost a blood but not quite"—has stood before us as a "masher," a "la-di-dah," a "chappie," a "gay young spark," and "one of the b-hoys." . . . And in America he has long been dubbed a dude.

George Grossmith, like every other student of man-about-town lore, is very careful to distinguish between the respective values of these different titles. Does a "blood" by any other name remain the same? "Most certainly not," is the reply of the man who is an expert on the subject.

"The difference between a 'blood' and a 'nut,' like most other differences in degree which are at all real, is not easily defined, but it is there, all the same. It is like the difference between the sportsman and the 'sport,' or between the true humorist and the so-called 'funny man' whom most of us would rather run a mile than meet. Twenty

years ago, the young-man-about-town we then knew as a 'Johnnie' was a gentleman, while his cheap imitation, a 'chappie,' was not. And, in just the same way, the 'blood' of to-day differs from the 'nut.'

"The 'blood' is, in short, a real dandy. The 'nut,' on the other hand, is a sham one. He is a masquerader. He is the sort of young man who never orders a drink unless it is of the three-in-one variety—one of those multi-coloured concoctions described by Mr. George Edgar as 'three or four fluids of different vivid hues mixed together in one, with a bright and ruddy cherry floating somewhere about in the result.' . . . By the very tawdriness of his attire and his swaggering gait and manner he betrays his lack of birth and breeding, his total inability to play the part he has assigned unto himself.

"As a rule, the 'nut' has only to speak to give himself away; but if you don't hear his accent, you can usually spot something about him that betrays, with silent eloquence, his origin. His collar is either a shade too high or a shade too low, or his

spats are a shade too light, his trousers a shade too wide or a shade too narrow, or they are, perhaps, hitched up a shade too high. There are a hundred and one little things about him by which you can easily tell.

"Occasionally, if you are young and inexperienced, you may be deceived. The best counterfeit of a 'blood' I have ever known, I first met when I was about twenty years of age, and at that impressionable period I was, for a time, completely carried away by his lordly air.

" 'Hello!' he said, meeting me one morning, at the beginning of September, on something so oddly humble as the top of a horse-bus. 'Awful surprised to see you in town, old fellah, although, now I come to think of it, not nearly so surprised as I am to see myself, because, of course, don't-cher-know, nobody's back in town yet.'

"It was the same gentleman whom, on another auspicious occasion, I met in Bond Street. 'Doing anything special?' he asked genially, and on my answering in the negative, he then said: 'Come and see my new autumn

socks'—a line which subsequently I put into the mouth of the very first 'blood' I played on the stage.

"One Sunday morning, in the height of the London season, we again collided and went for a little walk together in the Park. There, if anywhere, as he walked through the old-time Society parade, this elegant Man of Fashion was indeed in his element. 'Ah, here's Lady Norah. How old she's looking, to-day,' he drawled. 'Oh, and there's Lady X'—naming an eminent peeress—'everybody's too scandalised at the way she is flirting with young B, her grandson's best friend. Beastly bad form of B, I consider, to have taken such a mean advantage of the friendship in that way.' . . . Then, a little later: 'Well, hang me if that isn't the Duchess, stepping out like a two-year-old. Seems quite to have got over the engagement of Lord P.'

"And so it went on. My companion seemed to know everybody in London Society, although, strange to say, nobody seemed to know him. The mystery of this trifling circumstance was solved, a few days afterwards,

when I found he was the man who wrote the Fashion Column for a popular halfpenny newspaper.

"Some 'nuts' are, I admit, so tolerably well groomed that, to an undiscerning eye, they may at first sight pass muster as 'bloods.' But look a little closer, and you soon find they are too obviously immaculate. They only bear, after all, the gloss and shine of the spurious article. You do not need to be a tailor to realise that some men wear well-cut clothes, *with a difference*.

"A man cannot be a 'blood,' in short, unless he has blood. With this all-essential qualification, it is quite possible for him to fill the part for the rest of his days on only one suit—if he knows how to put it on. . . . I know a 'blood' who, for financial reasons, like his predecessor Brummell, is ending his days abroad. He left England over twenty years ago, and cannot afford to return. Gay and debonair as ever, he mixes by day with the best people in Paris, and proudly imagines them to be unaware that, by night, he steals home to an attic at the top of a musty old

house, standing in one of the most inaccessible back streets of Montmartre. . . . But now I am telling you his secret, which, like most secrets, everybody knows.

“If you saw this elderly buck, walking along the boulevards on a beautiful spring day, you would never think he came from such poverty-stricken lodgings. His figure is still splendidly erect and strikingly aristocratic. From a distance of fifty yards or so, he looks, every inch of him, like a peer of the old school. A closer inspection of him may show that his clothes are worn painfully threadbare, but, while this is so, they have been so carefully preserved that they are in no way tattered or frayed. And this is my chief point—however closely you examine him, he still looks a peer, all the same.

“After lunching with this modern Beau Brummell on my last visit to Paris I made the fatal blunder of helping him on with his coat. ‘For heaven’s sake, take care,’ he gasped. ‘If you handle it like that, it may break in two.’ And although he pretended to speak lightly, I knew he was genuinely dis-

tressed lest what he feared might come true, for the coat, like the rest of the wardrobe, had clearly seen its better days and would have been assigned by most of us to the rag-bag long ago. Yet, as this gallant sportsman wore it, it bore signs of almost as much distinction and elegance as on that far-off day, nearly a quarter of a century ago, when it was first delivered to him, brand-new, by Poole. And I really believe that if, eventually, he comes forth in rags, they will, at any rate, have one redeeming feature—they will be rags well cut. Everything he wears he adorns. He is 'a shabby genteel story' personified in the flesh, if ever there was one—living proof of the fact that any 'blood' can remain a 'blood' if only he has the air.

"Now, with a 'nut' it is different. . . . The type of 'nut' most commonly encountered troubles less about the cut of his clothes than the matter of their infinite variety. Unless his whole appearance deliberately hits you in the eye as he walks along the street, then, clearly, he feels he has missed fire and he must try again. His sartorial

ambition, apparently, is to be gaudy without being neat. Unlike the 'blood,' he knows nothing of Shakespeare's golden rule :

'Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not expressed in fancy ; rich, not gaudy.'

"Generally—and here you have the best indication of his general mode of dressing—it is to the hosier rather than the tailor that the 'nut' goes for his main effects ; it is, in short, as a rather doubtful walking advertisement for a 'very extra-special line of ties' or 'the very latest thing in socks' that he considers it his duty to go forth on parade. The actual cut and material of his suits hardly weigh with him at all—all that he demands is that they shall be loud and blatant enough to be in keeping with the rest of the picture. . . . The 'nut' of this kind is soon detected. You can spot him anywhere. His personality more than speaks for itself ; like money, it shouts. He is an anachronism, and fits so ill into the modern social scheme of things that he doesn't go a yard—least of all with the recognised members of the League of Gilded Youth he strives so hard to impress.



By courtesy of *The Tatler*.

THE PREHISTORIC "BLOOD."

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By courtesy of *The Illustrated London News*.

THE OPENING NIGHT OF THE NEW "GAIETY,"
AT WHICH KING EDWARD WAS PRESENT,
OCTOBER 26, 1903.

"A little while ago, we were enlivened by the exploits of a certain young man who made things hum on the hard-earned fortune of a quarter of a million he had inherited from a thrifty father. One of his most noteworthy performances took the form of a dramatic entry into a well-known bar in the Strand, where he lifted his cane, and, after smashing every bottle that he could see on the shelves, politely inquired: 'What do I owe you for that little lot?' . . .

"This youngster began by spending his money with no half-measures on the Jubilee-Juggins scale. He asked one actress he admired to name her favourite flower, and flooded her dressing-room the next evening with £40 worth of lilies-of-the-valley, the idiotic result being that the poor girl was so nauseated with the perfume that she has never liked it since.

"At Christmas-time the same young plutocrat invited the entire theatrical profession, although all of them did not accept, to a big party at the Metropole. Each lady received a dainty souvenir, the value of which was not

less than £800 ; and the bountiful young host evidently felt that his lavish entertainment would be incomplete without a little speech from himself. If brevity be what it is reputed to be, he was certainly very witty. ‘Ladies and gentlemen,’ he exclaimed eloquently on rising to his feet, ‘I am sorry I could not get any fresh asparagus, but it may interest you to know that the strawberries cost half-a-crown apiece !’

“Bankruptcy would have been a conventional ending to such a life-story. Happily, however, it wasn’t. In the nick of time the young man married ‘a lady from the Gaiety’ who has reformed her husband and managed his business affairs so shrewdly that, now, whatever happens, an income of £500 a year is assured to their little daughter.

“To call a young man of this description a ‘blood’ when, in reality, he is only a ‘nut,’ strikes me as a cruel slander on the ‘blood,’ who, if we use the definition as it was originally invented, is before all things a gentleman.

“From a ‘blood’s’ standpoint, too, the

confusion in terms is all the more irritating because he, personally, is so scrupulously careful in his choice of words, whether they be slang or otherwise. After long observation of him, I may add that the 'blood' is generally as fastidious about the language he uses as he is about the clothes he wears. Hence his charm as a *raconteur*.

"A distinct hardship in the lot of a woman who enjoys a good story is that she is so seldom privileged to hear one. In reputable English circles, the best stories rarely penetrate beyond the four walls of the smoke room. The small-talk of the average male has been delicately described as 'too good for the drawing-room.' But if all Englishmen possessed the story-telling faculty of the true 'blood,' woman's grievance on this score would be rapidly removed.

"Without giving offence, and, at the same time, without missing any of its most salient points, a 'blood' can usually be trusted to beguile a duchess with a story which would not bear repetition by a 'nut' to a suburban lady. The reason for this is not far to seek.

In the suburbs the story would be both improperly told, and—what is still worse—improperly listened to. And the most proper story under the sun is calculated to become improper, immediately it suffers such a fate, whereas the most improper story becomes almost proper, if properly told.

“My own view is that a really witty story can never be coarse, if it is encased in its right setting. Introduce one wrong word into the telling of it, though, and at once the damage is done. . . . The *beau raconteur* can amuse the most fastidious audience with a story about a lady who, to use his own term, was—‘lightly clad for the time of year.’ Just mark the delicacy of this description of the heroine and then contrast it with the bald way in which that young man of cruder pattern, the ‘nut,’ proceeds to describe her. Hearing the same tale from his lips, you learn, instead, that the lady was—well, if you are a man with a sensitive ear, you probably shudder with disgust at the blatant word he uses to bring before you the vision of her lack of garb.

“A nude statue may be the most beautiful

thing in creation ; but, put a pair of stockings on it, and what happens ? The nudity becomes nakedness—which is altogether different. It is fatal to let yourself wonder, with the inquisitiveness of a character from W. J. Locke, where Venus of Milo keeps her pocket-handkerchief. And telling a story is like modelling a statue : As all the best storytellers have so repeatedly warned us, we must know, first of all, what to leave out, and more than that, in some cases—what to leave on. Some nude figures do not please the eye, unless partially draped. And how much or how little drapery they need is one of the most important points a sculptor—or for that matter a story-teller—has to decide.

“ The man who is a born ‘ blood ’ realises all this by instinct and chooses very carefully, therefore, the time, the place, and the person, before he launches forth on a favourite yarn. He steels himself, intuitively, against the fatal blunder of telling a story in a wrong atmosphere. I mention this particular characteristic of the ‘ blood ’ because, too often, he is painted by those who have no real

knowledge of him as an effete and brainless noodle—a young man who mistakes the ‘etceteras’ of life for its essentials and is a good deal more careful about the cut of his coat than the use of his brains.”

CHAPTER XIII

THE " BLOOD " OF TO-DAY—AND YESTERDAY

THE world at large, it must be confessed, is not nearly so lenient as Grossmith in its judgment of the " blood." Serious-minded folk, as a rule, can see no health in him ; they even refuse to credit him with that happy gift of telling a good story well. Nor in the more tolerant surroundings of our London Clubs does he meet with fairer treatment, although the main charge levelled against him in that quarter is *not* that he is too reckless and roystering, but that, from lack of backbone and stamina, he is not reckless and roystering enough !

Among London Clubmen, as soon as they join the ranks of the middle-aged and elderly, a common topic of conversation centres in the question of whether the young-man-about-

town of to-day fulfils his *rôle* as an Apostle of Gaiety as efficiently and adequately as the man-about-town of yesterday—or, for that matter, of the day before yesterday. Is the present-day “blood” as fond of a lark, is he as liberally endowed with the old, inexhaustible fund of jest and jollity as were his father and his grandfather before him?

Since the majority of men are not wont to ask themselves this riddle until they have reached the age at which the past is surveyed as though it were a protracted Merry Christmas and the present as though it were one perpetual funeral, their conclusion is unanimous, of course, that the young “bloods” of to-day are not the men they used to be.

“Why, in the days of my youth,” an elderly *viveur* recently complained to Grossmith, “if you wanted to give a fair lady some token of your admiration, it had to be nothing less than a coach-and-four and a bijou residence in Park Lane. The young man of to-day, on the other hand, takes his ‘delightful little soul’ out to supper in the Savoy grill-room,



MILIE. CAMPTON AND "GEE-GEE"

As "Milord" and "Milady" in a *Folies Bergère* Revue.



A FEMININE "BLOOD."

A popular French *revue* actress, impersonating "Gee-Gee", as he appeared at the *Folies Bergère*.

and he at once fondly fancies he has set her up for life." But, as history so constantly repeats itself, need we be discouraged? Sighing for the past would seem to be the peculiar malady of the middle-aged. In 1869, Thackeray, with a liberal use of italics, in order the more forcibly to drive home his point, lamented that young bucks like Tom and Jerry, who flourished so far back as 1823, no longer survived.

"Now every London man is weary and *blasé*," he wrote. "There is an enjoyment of life in these young bucks of 1823, which contrasts strangely with our feelings in 1869." . . . Then: "A *turn* in Bond Street, a *stroll* through Piccadilly, a *look in* at Tattersalls', a *ramble* through Pall Mall, and a *strut* on the Corinthian path, fully occupied the time of our heroes until the hour for dinner arrived, when a few glasses of Tom's rich wine soon put them on the *qui vive*. Vauxhall was then the object in view, and the Trio started, bent upon enjoying the pleasures this place so amply affords."

Yet, as less enamoured critics have since shown, the Tom-and-Jerry age was the age

of excesses, of vulgar refinement and unreal politeness—"the last days of coarse caricatures of duelling and of the glorious three-bottle system after dinner." . . . "And Thackeray's pæon in praise of it becomes all the more amusing," Grossmith points out, "when it is recalled that he wrote it on the eve of 1870, the very period which has lately been idealised in turn by Mr. Ralph Nevill, that brilliant observer of contemporary men and affairs."

In his recently published book, "The Man of Pleasure," Mr. Nevill, who probably knows more about the Londoner of leisure than any other living writer, complains: "In spite of the ridiculous attitude which the Crutch and Toothpick Brigade pretended to adopt towards life, I believe their admiration for the stars of burlesque was more virile than the flabby adoration with which a large number of modern young men regard some of their idols."

"For my part I think Mr. Nevill's own comparison of the present-day 'blood' with the old-time 'buck' is all in favour of the

gilded youths we see around us," says Gros-smith. "The old-time buck used to fill in his time very differently from the 'blood' of to-day. He used to rise late, frittering away his day in idleness, in order to conserve his energies for the revelries of the night. The present-day 'blood,' on the other hand, if he conserves his energies at all, will do so at night in order not to interfere with his activity by day. Could there be a healthier sign of the times ?

"Nowadays a 'blood' rarely thinks he has justified his existence by being a 'blood' alone. A 'blood' by night is now, as often as not, a useful member of the community by day—perhaps a Guardsman, perhaps a stockbroker. . . . And because he has this more serious background to his life, it does not follow that his fund of high spirits is any the less irrepressible on that account. The 'bloods' of to-day are, I firmly believe, as full-blooded and lively as the 'bloods' of the past.

"But don't think that I differ from Mr. Nevill at all points of his survey of the young-

men-about-town of to-day. Their costumes and manners are, as he says, far more free-and-easy than were those of their predecessors of the Crutch and Toothpick days. Soft-hats and soft-fronts are worn, nowadays, in the West End where, formerly, stiff frock-coats and glossy silk hats were the invariable rule. And I am among those who decry the change, for, even though it may be attributed to such healthy pastimes as golf and motoring, I can't get rid of the feeling that it is a crime to walk down Bond Street in a tweed suit and a bowler at the most crowded hour of the day."

In a graphic pen-picture of the celebrated Cremorne Gardens, which, forty years ago, formed London's chief centre of gaiety, " somewhat resembling the *Jardin de Paris* and, occasionally, the scene of a good deal of light-hearted disorder," Mr. Nevill records that on certain nights this popular haunt was wont to be " a sort of battlefield " and much destruction ensued.

"Many lamps were smashed and tables overturned, and the ware with which the latter

were covered was thrown about or broken. Even the permanent structures were sometimes assailed and damaged in the most ruthless manner. A large force of police would appear, with the result that the ringleaders, generally well-known gilded youths, would be lodged in Chelsea Police Station. Every cell was filled, and, the prisoners overflowing the passages, the place was turned into pandemonium. Hardly a man of either captors or captured escaped without some visible evidence of personal injury; the clothing of most often being in tatters. But the hard knocks exchanged left little ill-humour behind them. Both swells and the police looked upon the whole affair as an enjoyable interlude, which broke the monotony of everyday life. Fines of £5 and £10 were inflicted, and, beyond a few broken heads, no one was very much the worse."

"I agree with Mr. Nevill, of course, in so far as the 'blood' of to-day does not seek pleasure as uproariously," says Grossmith. "He no longer shows the same marked genius for 'getting up against policemen' which characterised many of his kind in the

seventies. From that sphere of activity he has for some time retired—apparently in favour of the Suffragettes.

“ You see, nowadays, revelry of that sort is attended in this country with such dire results. The young ‘ blood ’ who wants to indulge in it had better go elsewhere—to Roumania, for example. During the recent Turco-Balkan war, it was my good fortune to meet in London a vivacious Roumanian lady, who invited me to visit her in Budapest as soon as the war was over—when, as she naïvely put it, ‘ there would be no danger that international complications would ensue.’ ‘ I can promise you a good time, if you come,’ she told me. ‘ First of all, you won’t meet with the annoyance of being turned out of a restaurant like a naughty child at 12.30 a.m. You can stay as long as you like ; and after that, if you can think of nothing more amusing to do and are too tired to go to bed, you can always go out and beat a policeman.’

“ Now and again, of course, one still runs up against wealthy young Englishmen who refuse point-blank to conform to our new



By Jean-Louis Boussingault.

AT THE FOLIES BERGÈRE.

and more staid conditions of life, but make valiant attempts to enjoy themselves in the old-time way without leaving London and travelling so far afield as Roumania. Among the young-men-about-town of to-day whose spirits always rise to the top, are the well-known sons of a sporting Baronet. Few men figure so prominently in the night-life of London, and, wherever they go, they are liked. There is no real vice or animosity about them, and I question whether they have an enemy in the world. Yet, like their popular father, they are never happier than when in the thick of a fight: they have an Englishman's innate love of a scrap.

“ I have seen the younger of these brothers, a man of tremendously powerful frame, hold back two commissionaires with one arm in order that the elder might have fair play in a little difference of opinion with an angry *maître d'hôtel*. . . . Supping with the older of them, again, in a crowded restaurant one evening, I remember he broke off in the middle of a conversation on some such serious topic as the Influence of the New



THE THREE CHAMPIONS : POLA, FANGO, TENNIS,
(Mr. Cecil Nickalls, "Goo-dee," and M. Max Devereux at
Peanville.)



A SEASIDE SNAPSHOT
"Goo-dee" caught by the camera while bathing at
Peanville.

Thought on Old Women, in order to attract the attention of the younger one, who had just entered at the far end of the room. A 'nut' in such a case would probably have shouted 'Hi!' But my friend, being too well bred to make such a vulgar exhibition of himself, adopted a simpler expedient; with much the same ease as he might have passed me the mustard, he threw a plate at the other young man's head.

"The shot was a good one, and undoubtedly would have struck home, had not a busy but heedless waiter suddenly rushed into the immediate line of fire and been instantly felled, instead. Of course, there was a tremendous commotion, the only man who did not appear at all startled being he who had fired the plate. 'I didn't mean to hurt the waiter,' he explained, when an irate manager rushed up to him. 'If a man can't throw a plate at his own brother, who can he throw it at?'

"[But in order to show that he bore no grudge against the man who had spoilt his aim, a series of banknotes quickly changed hands, and I hear on good authority, that now,

whenever a member of his family enters this restaurant, waiters wait patiently to be felled in the same way and on the same terms !

“ Still such scenes are exceptional, and it cannot be denied that, when once they have left the 'Varsity, the English young 'bloods' of the present day no longer give vent to such blatantly outward and visible signs of the healthy madness of youth as were expected from them in the old days. But this fact means, not that they are less gay, but that they are more rational in their gaiety ; they show, in short, more method in their madness. They seek escapades and 'adventures' as eagerly as ever, although—which is rather remarkable, perhaps, in a self-advertising age—they try to 'keep out of the papers' and to avoid the limelight as much as possible.

“ I really do not see why Mr. Nevill should reproach present-day young men with flabbiness, either in the matter of love-making or dare-devilry. They probably fall in and out of love quite as often as their fathers and grandfathers did. Not long ago, a young 'blood' of to-day regaled a little group of

us at the Club with the interesting piece of news that a country house-party provides the best possible field for the male flirt, if only he knows how to set to work. ‘When I am asked away for a week-end, I never waste time,’ he told us. “‘May I give you a kiss?’” I say point-blank to the first pretty girl I set eyes on.’ ‘But don’t you ever get kicked out of the house?’ croaked a Colonel of the old school, aghast, from his favourite corner. ‘Oh, yes, sometimes,’ he admitted, ‘but—I get a lot of kissing!’

“One friend of mine—strangely enough he died a bachelor—had such an incurable knack of falling temporarily in love with every second girl he met that he used to ask her, invariably, to marry him on the spot; and, eventually, this knack became so much a habit that, whether he liked the lady or not, he proposed to her just the same!

“‘Surely you can put a curb on yourself,’ I once remonstrated with him. ‘No, my dear fellow, I can’t,’ he answered. ‘Leave me alone with a girl and I never can think of anything else to do. I just say: “Will

you marry me ? ” and she always says : “ Yes.” And so there you are.’ . . . This vulnerable swain became engaged to be married so many times a month, and even a week, that, ultimately, he kept by him a typewritten-form letter which he sent off post-haste to every lady to whom he had proposed on the morning after the proposal ; and, so far as I know, each time he was let off. On the next page is an exact copy of the document he used to send.

“ Despite what our critics say of the lack of stamina in the modern young-man-about-town, they would find, if they troubled to inquire, that wagers involving physical strain and discomfort are just as popular as ever they were. In the small hours of the morning in a Piccadilly Club last summer two young fellows who had put in several hours dancing decided to take on, then and there, a bet that they would not walk in slippers from London to Brighton ; and by breakfast-time they had easily won. Then at four o’clock on another morning, lately, I was among the competitors in a race arranged between four

Jermyn Street,

W.

Dear *Nellie*,

It is quite possible that, last night, under the influence of excessive hilarity, I made certain proposals to you which I think it well to let you know, at the earliest possible moment, I have no intention of carrying out.

While I have the highest admiration for your delightful personality and attainments, I feel it would not make for the lasting happiness of either of us, if we entertained seriously the bargain discussed by us, last evening, and I am sure that, on more mature consideration, you, too, will agree with this decision, which, by the way, please regard as final.

Hoping you are feeling fit and not finding this beastly ~~North~~ *East* wind too trying,

I am, dear *Nellie*,

Yours very sincerely,

Claud

or five young men from Dover Street to Piccadilly Circus and back.

“These are just two isolated examples of events which are constantly happening. . . . I do not say that the ‘blood’ of to-day is a better specimen than the ‘blood’ of yesterday, but I certainly think that, in almost every respect, he is his equal, while, in many ways, he is vastly superior. In the old days, any man of tolerably good family could be a ‘blood,’ provided he was flamboyant enough. But, nowadays, sheer flamboyance is considered to be as much a defect in the manners of a man as in the decorations of a drawing-room. The ‘blood’ no longer rides forth to victory simply because he knows how to swagger and swashbuckle. To win, he must have something more than an attractive outward husk. Physical prowess, alone, will not pull him through. He must have brains as well as brawn; for, everywhere and in everything, brainlessness is at a discount, and even if one has definitely enlisted on the lighter side of life, one is still expected to cultivate one’s wits.

“ If Man is in any degree a less crude animal than he used to be, Woman, no doubt, is responsible for having brought about the change. For most of us, no matter how cocksure we may be of ourselves, try, unconsciously, to live up to what our women would have us be. At the time of the Cremorne Garden orgies, Mr. Nevill frankly admits that ‘ even the staidest of matrons and the demurest of misses, while outwardly professing to regard the conduct of their well-born friends and relatives as shockingly reprehensible, did not fail in the innermost recesses of their minds to applaud it as evidence of a manly spirit.’ . . . But since then there has been a great change. During the past twenty-five years, Woman has developed into a more discerning if not a more interesting species of the human race. She is not now so completely under the heel of Man ; she refuses to mistake mannishness for manliness.

“ The ladies of the ‘ Gaiety,’ meanwhile, as even their bitterest critics agree, have improved with the rest of their sex, and—who

knows?—it may be they who have raised the standard of the ‘ blood.’ There is, by the way, one other small point on which I would like to cross swords with my friend Mr. Nevill. Somewhere in his book he laments that the *viveur* has ceased to be so much to the fore in the audience on ‘ Gaiety ’ first-nights. . . . From personal observation, I can testify, however, that the *viveur* turns up, just the same ; but in these days of Women’s Rights, he is apt to be lost sight of, because he has been joined by—the *viveuse* ! ”



THE CORONATION PERFORMANCE AT HIS THEATRE, JUNE 1911.

THE CORONATION PERFORMANCE AT HIS THEATRE, JUNE 1911.

They were watching Sheridan's "The Critic" (Mr. Edmund Payne as "The Critic" as Dangle, and Mr. C. Hawtrey as "The Critic" as Dangle).

CHAPTER XIV

SUPPER-PARTIES

AT supper-time the West End of London is now one vast Cosmopolis. On the stroke of midnight, each of the leading restaurants is thronged by all sorts of men—and both sorts of women.

“Where else under one roof can be seen so many widely different human types?” asks Grossmith. “At one table you see, perhaps, ‘the mother of the Gracchi’—an immaculate dame in sedate black silk, looking the model of Spartan severity; from the majesty of her mien, you would bet your bottom dollar she is either that famous English authoress who writes novels as if they were sermons, or else she is one of those affrighting goddesses who are usually in charge of the mantle departments in big drapery-

houses. Subsequently, you are told she is the proprietress of one of the liveliest establishments in Paris. . . . And near to her there sits another woman attired in white satin and diamonds—principally diamonds. Later you are astonished to find she is the President of the Amazonian League for the Suppression if not Total Extinction of Man. In the pursuit of her life-work, this lady is evidently either a casuist or a hypocrite. And whichever cloak she has borrowed it is rather a scanty covering. She is—well, you know the sort of charmer I mean ; you have to look carefully under the table before you can be quite sure she has any clothes on, at all.

“ Another glance round the room, and you awake to other phases of the human comedy. On the left is a contingent of ‘ Whites ’ ; and on the right—much to the disgust of American visitors who cannot understand why such things are tolerated in England—a contingent of ‘ Blacks.’

“ And that fine figure of a man, entertaining his boon-companions so cheerily at the

table in the corner, to whom nearly every pretty woman on entering bows and smiles—who's he? Is he a popular actor or a rich Argentine—or is he that stalwart explorer who has been so fêted and fawned over by Society that he now shows signs of becoming flabby and overfed—a typical Alderman, in fact? No, on the contrary, he is the manager of one of the most fashionable *chapelleries* in London. 'He is so kind, you know, my dear!' one guileless little lady explains to another. 'Why, he actually threw in that charming little hat I wore, this afternoon'—in reality, a bit of twisted ribbon, dashed with two or three sequins—'for an old song, five guineas instead of eight.' Meanwhile, the commercial instinct of her husband, or other male companion, is aroused, and he begins to cogitate over little things like 'cost price.'

" 'At the end of my night's work, I like to sit watching you English at supper,' a brilliant French actress observed to me when she appeared in London for a short season. 'You see, there are so many differ-

ent kinds of you. And, most of all, I like to watch "the inscrutables." By 'the inscrutables,' I found, later, she meant the typically well bred Englishman and his wife. 'As they sit, supping, it is impossible to say of just what they are thinking' she went on to say. 'Does any one ever get to know it? Do they know it themselves? They are the people who never turn round—not even when there is a great smashing of plates!'

"And as I pondered her words, I decided the description was not at all a bad one. It is certainly true that upper-class English folk cultivate a certain inscrutability; they make a point of never being surprised. There is a type of Society woman who will hardly forget herself if her husband becomes tied up in the wheels of a motor-bus near Hyde Park Corner. 'Oh, Cyril, what are you doing!' is about all she will exclaim. And, in the same way, the best type of Englishman remains unperturbed even when a careless waiter empties a whole coffee-pot over his shirt-front. 'But you've forgotten the milk!' is all he troubles to say.

“ ‘And next to the inscrutables,’ this French-woman added, ‘I like to see the people who seem to have found their way into a *chic* restaurant in error—who have, so to speak, “got there by mistake”—isn’t that what you say? They come, once in a while, just for one evening, from places like—how do you call it? Isn’t it Upper-Tooting-les-Bains?’ ”

“I quite agree with this lady that it is usually the people who are not quite in the picture who lend the right touch of comedy to nearly every scene. Only the other night, at the Carlton, I saw a happy family party who gave the amusing impression of ‘having got there by mistake.’ It consisted of Father and Mother—I had almost said ‘Pa’ and ‘Ma’—and their two daughters, Lydia, who languished almost as much as her name implied, and ‘Virelet,’ a pert little minx whose chief characteristic was an insatiable curiosity. . . . ‘Virelet’ soon showed she had a keen eye for the spotting of celebrities—of the stage, and otherwise. Apparently she knew everybody—at any rate, by picture-postcard, if not exactly by sight. She began by con-

fusing Lord Charles Beresford with Mr. Rutland Barrington and Mr. Bottomley with Lord Haldane. She, also, assiduously inquired whether every second matronly lady who was seen to enter were not Mrs. Kendal, while every second pretty one she mistook for Miss Gabrielle Ray—or, if she were not Miss Ray, why, then, she was Miss Pauline Chase.

“Before the evening was over, she was, of course, convinced as to precisely which couple were a certain actress and an uncertain duke. Yet, if she had only known it, silly infant! this particular pair were merely an ordinary husband and wife, supping surreptitiously. . . . (And even although it is quite true, as this little girl supposed, that an actress may sometimes sup out with a duke, she will be interested to know that at the table just opposite to them there may be—and often is—a duchess and an actor!)

“In a supper-party full of such various little human touches, I can’t say which little episode tickled me the most. First, the menu was examined as seriously as if it had been a theological treatise. And here the year the girls

had spent at school in France proved eminently fruitful ; they showed off the signs of a superior education to their proud parents with all the necessary finish. Now and again, to decipher just what were the different dishes required a little wrinkling of the brows, because, you see, as that prince of epicures, the late Mr. Frank Schloesser, used to say, ' Chef's French is not unlike Dog-Latin.'

" At length, we had all been made fully aware of what we were about to eat, and my hostess was soon busily attacking the plover's eggs with her fish-knife and fork. The observant ' Virelet ' was quick to note the mistake. ' You don't eat them that way, Mamma,' she whispered loftily. . . . ' Well, don't you, now ? ' was her mother's good-humoured reply. ' Still, how was I to know ? I do declare they serve up these sort of things as a catch, just to show whether you come here regularly or whether you don't. But never mind, we'll know better next time ! '

" On another occasion, I remember, I was asked to join a little supper-party at the Savoy, given by a rich man from the North.

He is an excellent fellow, whom I highly esteem ; and if he and his wife failed to do just what is expected from people who give supper-parties at the Savoy, it was not because at heart they are mean, but because they rarely sup out—in fact, they hardly ever come to town.

“ ‘ Let me see, we’ll need something to drink. How about a decanter of claret ? ’ mine host asked jovially, as we sat down, and, since he was a man of generous instincts, a bottle of Médoc was the pleasing result. . . . A student of physiognomy would have been interested in the face of the waiter when, at the end of the meal, my friend from the country began to count his change for the purpose of tips ; at once, at the other end of the table, there was a loud rustling of silk and a good deal of fumbling in a portly bag-purse. Then : ‘ I have some coppers, James,’ said his thoughtful little wife.

“ At supper-parties of this sort, each man tips according to his light ; and by the same beacon, also, he is led to order his wine. It is truly astonishing how many of the all-



Photo by Fradelle & Young.

DINNER GIVEN TO MR. JOSEPH KNIGHT, THE CRITIC, BY THE DRAMATIC PROFESSION, ON JUNE 4, 1905,
AT WHICH SIR HENRY IRVING, WHO PRESIDED, APPEARED FOR THE LAST TIME AMONG HIS STAGE-CONFERERES.

important little things of life are overlooked by otherwise quite excellent people. And the question of 'tips' is one of them. 'Tipping' may be a curse, but, so long as the system remains, what other alternative have we than to bow our heads under it, if waiters are to live?

"Yet, one meets wealthy men who have whole fleets of motor-cars and are so rich that they might almost run a private tube service of trains, exclusively for their own use, if they were so inclined. They spend money lavishly in all directions. In one little thing only their munificence falls short—the amount of their tips. . . . A threepenny-bit, administered cheerfully after a three-pound meal—that's about the weight of their bounty, whereas in all the more expensive London restaurants it is customary to 'remember the waiter' at the rate of a shilling a head.

"The finer points of chivalry observed by some men in their discharge of the 'tipping' obligation, are shown in the story of the impecunious American who asked a more affluent friend if he 'would lend him a quarter to get

something to eat.' 'But you've got a dollar in your hand, now!' the other protested. 'Sure. That's for the waiter,' he replied.

"The little supper-parties I have just mentioned may not be of the usual kind one joins at the Carlton or the Savoy. But, almost any night of the week, one can espy country cousins engaged in the business of judiciously painting the town red in this way, and who can deny that they add to the fun of the passing show, made up as it is of a whole series of interesting side-shows?

"Lastly, there is the part played by the lady of the 'Gaiety' in the supper-scheme of things—a part which cannot be over-rated, for it is at supper-time she lives up to her name. Then it is she is seen at her gayest and best; and it is a glum supper-party indeed, if she cannot liven things up.

"Of supperland, or such portions of it as are seen in the full limelight of the London restaurants, I think it may be fairly said, without any invidious distinction, that our 'Gaiety' ladies are the uncrowned queens.

"'Little rays of sunshine—that's what I

call 'em,' one aristocratic stripling exclaimed to me enthusiastically. 'Whatever should we do without 'em?' And as this particular youth is an unconscionable bore, who habitually talks like a soap advertisement whenever he waxes eloquent over anything, I watched his progress among the ladies in question with special interest. How long would they tolerate him? No doubt, at first they felt a bit flattered, to be asked out to sup by one who is the bearer of a historic name. But one thing was soon noticed: the tedious Lothario never supped out with the same girl twice. And I never fully understood why this should be so, until after supper, one night, I ran up against him and one of the daintiest of our chorus ladies, in the vestibule of the Savoy. This is what I overheard:

"HE (*patronisingly*). 'What are you doing to-morrow? Let's have another "rag."'

"SHE (*politely*). 'I am sorry, but I'm afraid I can't—I——'

"HE (*persistently*). 'Oh, but why not? Surely, you can arrange——'

"SHE (*coldly*). 'No, indeed, I can't; and,

if you must know the reason, “rags” with you are such wet rags!’

“Nowadays, the ‘Gaiety’ lady refuses to be patronised; and she seldom permits herself to be bored—no matter who the bore may be. ‘Life is too short to suffer bores gladly,’ she says glibly, if you chide her on the scant ceremony with which she ‘tells off’ the unwelcome hanger-on; and when one considers what a busy young woman she is, there may be something in her contention. . . .

“A mere man, when he accepts an invitation out to supper, usually says he is delighted to come—whether he is or he isn’t; and if he refuses, then he says he is sorry—whether he is or he isn’t. But the ‘Gaiety’ lady is more candid; she attends to little social duties of this sort in a way that is all her own. You proffer her your supper invitation in your best *Louis Quatorze* style; and, at once, she makes no bones as to her feelings towards you and your entertainment.

“‘Who else is going?’ is the first question she asks, before giving you a definite answer, and if, on being informed, she finds

she doesn't like the company you keep, she very promptly says: 'No, thanks.' At the same time, she is not nearly such an outlaw on points of social etiquette as she may, at first, seem. 'Do I kiss his foot, or anything?' a little 'Gaiety' lady was once heard anxiously to inquire of another, as she was about to be introduced to a Greek Prince.

"It is a mistake to suppose that experienced 'Gaiety' ladies keep their prospective supper-swains hovering around the stage-door. As a rule, they send them on to await their advent at the chosen restaurant. Still, the 'little band of the faithful' are almost invariably kept dangling at one end or other of the line; and the man who aspires to play host to a 'Gaiety' lady has to quickly resign himself to the fact that he is booked for a waiting game. Having gone on in advance by the lady's request, he probably spends the first quarter of an hour of his tryst, hanging about in corridors and lounges, like, shall we say, 'a wet umbrella or a disused parasol'? Then, in sheer desperation, at the end of half an hour, he resolves to begin supper in soli-

tary state. . . . And, sometimes, it is not until he is nearing the coffee-stage that his enchantress appears. 'I am so frightfully sorry to be so frightfully late,' she then says contritely. 'But you can't imagine the frightful bother I had to shake off Charlie!'

" 'Seems to me that taking a little girl from the "Gaiety" out to supper means spending most of the time by yourself,' a youth who was tired of the pleasures of life complained to me one evening, while he was waiting in this way. 'When at last she turns up, it is practically closing-time. Of course I admit you can see her home in a taxi. . . . But how about the return journey? If she lives way out back of the beyond—and it's generally the other side of Balham—it's too lonesome for words. I assure you Dick Whittington's feelings weren't in it, compared with the relief I felt when, from the taxi window, I saw the headlights of St. George's Hospital loom into view on my return from seeing a little girl home to the furthestmost point in South London!'

"But whenever she thinks she is likely to

enjoy herself, a ' Gaiety ' lady, like any other woman, has the sense to turn up for supper in fairly good time," Grossmith is gallant enough to admit. " That is to say, she will not be more than twenty minutes to half an hour late.

" For us stage-folk, as for every one else who sups out a great deal, the law, which forbids us to eat, drink, and make merry in public places, later than twelve-thirty, is rather a hardship; still, it cuts both ways, for it has its advantages; and personally, although this is not the popular view, I think it is rather a blessing to rise from the supper-table with the feeling that you are sorry to go. If you are allowed to stay as long as you like the worst of it is that, quite possibly, you will stay even longer. . . . In Paris, I have sometimes joined supper-parties in restaurants which dragged on until dawn, until, at length, I would have fervently sung a hymn of thanksgiving if some one had come along with the power to turn us out.

" Moreover, on special occasions—as, for instance, the first night of a musical play at

a popular theatre—a special licence is often obtained in restaurants, so that you can continue your revelry for another two or three hours. . . .

“ ‘What on earth is the meaning of all this?’ a mystified country-friend of mine once inquired, on entering one of the more Bohemian of these supper-places and finding pandemonium at full blast, although, as a matter of fact, the fun was only just beginning. Ammunition in the shape of confetti and celluloid balls was being shot out from one end of the room to the other, its ultimate destination being, no doubt—some other poor mortal’s soup. All the ladies were lively, while the men were livelier still. ‘What on earth is the meaning of all this?’ the stranger repeated. ‘Oh, this, sir? Special licence, sir,’ was the waiter’s reply. ‘First night of the “Girl in the Bath,”’—or whatever the name of that particular musical play chanced to be.

“And this same stranger would have been even more astonished, no doubt, if he had visited the same restaurant the next



A "BEEFSTEAK" SUPPER-PARTY IN NEW YORK.

Among the assembled guests are Gertie Millar, George Grossmith, Blanche Ring, Mary Bowland, Lionel Mackinder, Jack Hazzard, Barthélemy, and Henri Leon.

night, for, quite probably, he would have found the same set of people subjecting themselves to the same curious process of gaiety in exactly the same way. 'What is it this time?' he would have gasped feebly, now altogether overcome; while the waiter replied: 'Oh, this, sir? Another special licence, sir. Last night of "The Girl in the Bath."' "

"In England, unless a supper-party is hilarious, it doesn't coincide with an Englishman's idea of enjoyment at all. The pleasures of the supper-table, as he understands them, are summed up in the one little word—noise. . . . Naturally, therefore, all the jolliest supper-parties are given in private—where there are no lookers-on. And Society girls, you find, are just as ready as stage girls to join in the boisterous antics of their male-friends, provided the scene of these supper-time revels is in a private room."

Although supper-parties are much more firmly established as a definite institution in London than in Paris, it is to Paris, never-

theless, one must go to see people supping publicly and, at the same time, abandoning all reserve. At that well-known Paris restaurant which is the favourite supper haunt of stage-folk after the theatre, every one seems to be so refreshingly intimate with nearly every one else, that each night's gathering is a happy family party. And the same spirit of intimacy is even caught by the French journalists in their accounts of these supper-parties, as the following neat little sketch of a midnight scene, in which Grossmith himself figured, shows :

Et c'est, après, dans *leur* restaurant favori. Il y a là à la même table : Robert de Flers, Caillavet, Henry Bernstein, Fernand Vandérem. Puis Marguerite Deval, étrangement animée . . . et la délicieuse brune dont la virginale senteur embaume, et dont le nom de Gisèle Gravier nous taquine les moelles. . . . (Petite Gravier je devais vous jeter en mon jardin !) Et -c'est le doux Didier de Roulx, la brune Germaine Fabiani, un vrai tison ! Paul Marieton qui nous sert les plus extravagantes comparaisons à l'endroit de

quelques-unes de nos dames de lettres. . . . Enfin Max Dearly qui traite l'illustre Géo Grossmith dont la tête de crevette cuite a des allures de souris. Et l'on boit à Caruso ! . . . Là-bas, les Isola . . . Feydeau . . . tant d'autres. Ils y sont tous, je vous dis. . . .”

“ On this side of the Channel,” says Grossmith, “ all the most interesting things take place behind closed doors. The natural instinct of the Englishman is to be *en privé*, whether he is building a house or giving a supper-party. . . . And this reminds me of a curious little *contretemps* that lit up a little supper-party I gave a year or two ago, in a private room at a certain restaurant. A Cabinet Minister was among my guests, and I have often wondered since whether he would not have been a trifle surprised if he had known that, disguised as a waiter, a certain highly-placed landowner, one of his fiercest political opponents, whom he has persistently attacked from public platforms, stood behind his chair and poured out his champagne on that festive evening. Yet

such was, indeed, the case. . . . To this day, the secret has been well kept, though, if Cabinet Ministers read books about actors, it may now be a secret no more."

CHAPTER XV

“ A PEERESS ” WRITES TO “ THE TIMES ”

THE London season of 1913 will long be memorable for the Battle of the Tango and the Turkey Trot—the inky conflict that raged so furiously around the ethics of these modern dances, in the correspondence columns of *The Times* and other newspapers, and, eventually, became the foremost social topic of the hour. . . . The first shot in the battle, it will be recalled, was fired by a lady who, signing herself “ A Peeress,” wrote to *The Times*, asking for the Editor’s advice as to how she could best guard her *protégée*, a young girl of eighteen, from what she called “ the scandalous travesties of dancing ” now to be seen in our London ballrooms.

“ Frankly, I think ‘ A Peeress ’ must have been suffering from—well, I hardly know how

to diagnose her curious feminine *malaise*," says Grossmith. "I should think one might call it a cross between moral indigestion and fatty degeneration of the conscience, or, to speak in non-technical terms, she could not see straight for her scruples. . . . But perhaps she was really a humorist in disguise, setting the ball rolling in such lugubrious style merely to lighten the conversational leaven of the London season. And if that is so, she most admirably succeeded, for everywhere one went, for at least a month after her letter appeared, every one else seemed to talk and think only in terms of the Tango and the Turkey Trot.

"In any case, all were agreed that the correspondence thus initiated in *The Times* was remarkably good fun. First there came the outspoken reply to 'A Peeress's' lament from Senex, an elderly gentleman, whose hazardous duty it was to pilot three unmarried daughters through the uncertain seas of each London season, putting in an appearance with his charges, as he put it, 'at nearly all the entertainments that are

chronicled in *The Times*.' He began by testifying to the positive sense of *rajeunissement* he derived from the very dances to which such grave exception was taken—the exact opposite of the lassitude he had experienced some four or five years before, when, on the *début* of his youngest daughter, he had, perforce, been obliged to re-enter the ballroom for the first time since his youth. Ah, how he had then sighed for the gay and lively polkas of his boyhood instead of that never-ending, langourous, and wearisome waltz!

“ ‘ In a word, sir, five years ago the doorways were bored,’ this veteran summed up vigorously. ‘ The evening’s programme was responsible for some scarcely-stifled yawns. But, as a result of the change, how different was now the picture! . . . Let me make it known, and with no uncertain note, that I now walk homeward up Gloucester Place with elastic tread, feeling from thirteen to twenty years younger than ever I hoped to do at my age. ’ ”

Then another correspondent—this time a Society dame, philosophical enough to admit

herself no longer young—stepped with such delightful ease and grace into the fray that Grossmith insists that I quote her witty testimony in full :

“ At my age, the path of duty leads,” she wrote, “ but to the bench—the chaperon’s bench, whether at the pleasant public house, commonly known as the Ritz, or in the houses of the so-called upper classes. Looking back twenty-five years, I can only say, ‘ Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose ’—the refined and dignified dance refinedly and dignifiedly, and the peeress really need not fuss if her charge is what her traditions and breeding have doubtless made her. From my comfortless bench I see one or two couples—the gentlemen are foreigners—who add to their great natural grace an unnecessary touch of amorousness in their movements. But even on the bench no sleepy eye-brow is lifted : the exception is accounted for by the dancer’s eccentric choice of birthplace.”

“ Of the people who ranged themselves on the other side in this heated controversy, I don’t think it is necessary to say much,” says



By Jean Louis Boussingault.

THE TANGO CARICATURED.

Grossmith, as he runs through his records of the correspondence. “ For the most part, they spoke for themselves. . . . One correspondent, signing himself ‘ Another Parent,’ who said ‘ the whole aspect of affairs was as distressing as it was novel ’ to him, interpolated his remarks with the confession that he ‘ mixed not freely with the world, and only that part of it which is confined to clerical duties in a West-Country town ’ ! . . . So you see how vast was their experience of the ways of the world—and the ballroom !

“ I believe all the fuss arose from failure to perceive the difference between cabaret dancing and ballroom dancing. Certain adventurous English folk, visiting Paris, had seen the Tango or the Turkey Trot as they are danced in a cabaret but not in a ballroom ; and they came home with stories that spread like wild-fire. . . . And I should not be at all surprised if ‘ A Peeress ’ cried out before she was really hurt. She began to imagine she actually saw in London ballrooms what, as a matter of fact, she had only heard described ; for I am quite sure that, if a couple con-

ducted themselves at a conventional Society dance, either in London or Paris, as they would in a cabaret, they would be shown the door without the slightest demur.

“ Obviously, any dance can be made indecent—a polka or schottische quite as easily as the Tango, which, in itself, is one of the most graceful and beautiful of dances if properly danced. . . . As for all the terrible stories of its origin, why, every dance has a savage origin; it is generated, so to speak, from the animal instinct. . . . The Scottish reel is of savage origin, and it becomes both vulgar and ridiculous when caricatured by a Cockney, the truth being that a dance must always be grotesque if it is alien to the temperament of the dancer.

“ Then, even should the origin of these new dances be negroid, as their critics allege, is that wholly a reproach where dancing is concerned? . . . The negro doesn’t exist who can’t harmonise naturally, while there is scarcely an Englishman who can.”

The protest of “ A Peeress ” certainly supplied one delicious touch of comedy. It

showed that protests of exactly the same sort have been made with unfailing regularity during the past hundred years, whenever a new dance has been introduced. Among other interesting tit-bits of fact unearthed by *The Times* in the course of this feud, it was found that in 1844, when so innocent a dance as the polka first came to London, inspiring, then-days, a craze which neither the “ Boston ” nor the Tango nor the Turkey Trot is likely to rival, *The Illustrated London News* gravely warned those who danced it that there should be “ no stamping of heels and toes or kicking of legs in sharp angles forward. This may do very well,” the said periodical thundered, “ at the threshold of a Bohemian *auberge*, but is inadmissible in the *salons* of London or Paris.” And it was further pointed out that even the decorous waltz had its voluptuous possibilities, for had not Byron written ?

“ Round all the confines of the yielded waist
The stranger’s hand may wander, undisplaced.”

Quotations from *The Letter-Bag of Lady Elizabeth Spencer Stanhope* proved, moreover, that in a letter written so far back as 1812,

the polka was anathematised as “an obnoxious dance, calculated to lead to the most licentious consequences. . . .” The *Sporting Magazine* had described it as a dance which, “to the disgrace of sense and taste, has obtruded itself into the whole circle of the fashionable world . . . a will-corrupting dance . . . a compound of immodest gesture and infectious poison.”

But, on the other hand, even in those remote times, there were folk who perceived it to be a mistaken policy to condemn this newly discovered and highly objectionable polka too rigorously. “Jump, Judy, jump! The Guardsmen are looking on,” one Irish lady of the period called desperately to her daughter, who was not displaying enough spirit in her dancing. . . . And, nowadays, therefore, as Lady Bell, a well-known Society woman of to-day pointed out, “it might be as well, since the Guardsmen are still looking on, to encourage the modern Judy to jump instead of reproving her for doing so.”

“Need we mind, then,” asks Grossmith, “if the Tango strikes some antiquated folk

who have never seen it danced properly as—again I quote from *The Times*—‘ a degenerate dance of close and indelicate squirmings in which the sex element is symbolised in some of its most primitive elements ’ ?

“ It so happened that, when this storm in an ink-pot was at its height, a young couple of the humbler ranks were charged at the Marylebone Police Court with having danced together after midnight in a London street. My friend Mr. Plowden rose to the occasion in his peculiarly winsome way. ‘ Go away and be as sad as you can,’ he said ironically, on dismissing the case. ‘ You both appear to have been happy ; but understand that this is not a country where you can afford to be jovial. Cultivate a spirit of melancholy, if you would be safe.’

“ Had ‘ A Peeress ’—that ‘ lady with a bony soul,’ as Mr. Wells would call her—been consulted in the matter, she would doubtless have given the same advice, speaking the words literally from the bottom of her—conscience. . . . Meanwhile, I would remind her august ladyship that dancing is an expression

of the age. How would the young people of to-day like their dance-programmes to be composed exclusively of minuets and schot-tisches—not to mention those disreputable and naughty polkas? No; if we would not be left behind, we must march with the times—and dance with them, too.”

CHAPTER XVI

CHAMPAGNE TASTES ON BEER INCOMES

“AT the Savoy, the other night,” Grossmith tells me, later, “it was just my luck to sit at the next table to a very small man with a very big voice, the most striking articles of whose attire were side-whiskers and a pair of spectacles. Elderly and mild-mannered, he attacked his supper with a ferocity more healthy than becoming.

“At first I did not feel attracted towards him. He had the look of a man who had addressed a P.S.A. Brotherhood last Sunday afternoon, and is physically incapable of forgetting the fact, although it is Friday night. And as the champagne flowed more freely, he grew more and more drunk with the sense of his own powers of oratory. His pulpit eloquence, at length, became so strident that my

companion and I, in common with the entire grill-room, could not help but hear all he had to say. In the comparatively short space of time which separates the coffee from the *saumon fumé*, I don't doubt that this human megaphone threshed out all the affairs of the Universe from the Garden of Eden to the troubles that seemed, at the moment, to be brewing in one of the Near Eastern States. But, incidentally, he delivered himself of a strikingly *fortissimo* passage which, to my thinking, was worth all the rest.

“‘What ails England?’ he asked, with a declamatory flourish of his fork. Then, after an effective pause, tempered by an uncannily knowing nod, he obligingly added, ‘I’ll tell you. . . . It isn’t her Churches. It isn’t her music-halls. It’s champagne tastes on beer incomes!’

“*Champagne tastes on beer incomes!* I had never before been so struck by this old-time phrase; and I gladly endured the gentleman of the whiskers and the verbiage for the rest of the evening, because he had revived it. It carried me back to the days



Photo by the London News Agency.

LADY ALEXANDER WITH "GEE-GEE" AS MEMBERS OF THE
CHINESE COURT AT THE VERSAILLES BALL AT THE ALBERT
HALL, JUNE 1913.

when I, too, had suffered, as I more than suspect I still suffer, from this highly reprehensible failing. How often in my 'prentice days, in response to the call of my champagne-tastes, I wandered at supper-time, on my beer income, into the places which have since been superseded by the Carlton, the Ritz, and the Savoy, and with what an opulent air I then consulted the menu, quite as though I were a Duke—or, at any rate, a company-promoter.

“Those were my gala-nights. Then I ate and drank with my friends, regardless of cost. Even when an unfeeling waiter showed his skill as a mathematician by a series of unwieldy operations with a stump of a pencil across the piece of parchment or tissue paper which, in cold, brutal English, is known as ‘the bill,’ man of beer income although I was, I steadily refused to turn a hair. Glancing carelessly at the total amount as the document was handed to me, I managed to keep my mental balance with what I flattered myself was perfect *sang-froid*, paying up with an air of indifference which

is so difficult of mastery for older men that it practically ranks as a special gift from the gods to Youth. Finally, that there might be no discordant note in the picture, I used to tip the waiter with a lavish recklessness which would have made his more modest *confrère* in the humbler eating-house, where I usually supped, fall down dead on the spot. . . .

“ And so it was, as I recalled all this, sitting at supper in the Savoy grill-room, the other night, I could not help looking around me and trying to pick out for my own private amusement such very young men as, I thought, might be afflicted with the disease of champagne tastes on beer incomes—just as I was, from fifteen to twenty years ago. Were there any young men in the room, for instance, who would have to make all manner of strange and secret sacrifices for the one privilege of taking a certain favoured little lady out to sup? Would any of them, I wondered, have to pay for that one night’s pleasure by lunching furtively for a month from the *plat-du-jour* in a secluded A.B.C., until such time as

their next remittance came, when, in all probability, history would repeat itself and there would be another gorgeous supper, to be followed by thirty more of those furtive lunches? It was impossible to tell, of course.

“Nor are young people, alone, victims of the malady. How about the connoisseurs who give way to that most modern of all cravings—the collecting of antiques; to say nothing of the bibliophiles who will cheerfully risk a visit from the bailiffs for the sake of a rare edition? And the clergy, sometimes, catch it in its most insidious form, for I have read of a much-dunned vicar, who preached to a congregation, which included many of his creditors, from the text: ‘Have patience with me and I will pay thee all.’ . . .

“Then, many of us still feel the loss of a certain cheery Bohemian who died, recently, after living quite comfortably on champagne tastes for the greater part of his days. The one luxury for which he himself actually paid was his annual subscription as member of a leading London Club. His fellow-Clubmen never discovered his private

address, but they knew that he lived in some remote suburban region on about twopence a year; and they treated him daily to his lunches, dinners, and drinks, buying his company, so to speak, because it was essentially such good fun. The sense of indebtedness seemed to be more on their side than on his, in fact, and they never expected their hospitality to be returned.

“They were agreeably surprised, therefore, when, one day, at the Club, this friend turned and invited a party of them to meet him outside the Carlton, a few nights later, for dinner. Delicacy of feeling alone prevented them from asking him if he had been left a fortune, but, nevertheless, they all thought this must be the happy state of affairs. And in due course they turned up in immaculate evening dress outside the Carlton as arranged. Their host was the last to arrive. ‘Let me see, now, are we all here?’ he began breezily. ‘Very well then, let’s take a bus to——’ And he named the cheapest restaurant in Soho.

“Here and there one meets folk who make strenuous efforts to reconcile their champagne-

tastes with their beer-incomes. 'The lager is very good here,' a brave young man was once heard wistfully to suggest to the lady-friend he had asked out to supper at the Carlton, as his eye roved down the wine-list. But the average young 'blood' is not blessed with such superhuman self-control. He holds the purse-strings more loosely—more in the manner of the young undergraduate at Cambridge who heaved a sigh of relief and gave a big banquet—because he had got his debts down to £500 !

“Those who have tried the experiment tell me it is fatal, if you can only afford beer, to attempt to live up to champagne. 'The result is horrible: you get the dregs of both,' they say. . . . But however this may be, I have certainly known men who have contrived to enjoy themselves 'up to the champagne standard' on very little money—and even on no money at all. Quite how they do it is not easily fathomed; but perhaps they work on the lines of a certain man-about-town who used to look in at the best restaurants for a very light lunch and, at the

same time, cash a very big cheque. Eventually, the different managements grew a little tired of this mode of payment and, one day, there was rather more muttering than usual, up at the cash-desk. But the trying customer was in no way nonplussed: 'Now then, waiter,' he called. 'Hurry up with that change. They're waiting for it at the bank.'

"As a contrast to the people who suffer from the disease in a normal way, most of us know others who are abnormal enough to have contracted it the other way round: they have beer tastes on champagne incomes! There is the memorable case of the chef who refused to stay in the service of a well-known millionaire at a salary of £1,000 a year because his master's tastes did not soar higher than boiled beef and pickles. 'I am a man of genius, and I cannot cook without sympathy,' he exclaimed, as he almost wept with indignation on parting.

"Then somebody else—I fancy it was George Moore—has lately been telling the story of how an Englishman, notoriously addicted to high thinking and low living,

scored over the pompous manager of one of the most luxurious hotels abroad. 'The cooking here is international,' the hotel man said impressively. 'You will find in it all the best features of the cooking of Paris, Rome, St. Petersburg, Munich, Geneva, Aix-les-Bains——' 'Very well, then,' interrupted the visitor. 'Bring me a plain mutton-chop, cooked just like my plain cook cooks it at home.'

"I think that actors as a class, perhaps, know more of the irony of champagne tastes on beer incomes than the members of any other profession. There are few careers in which life is such 'an awfully big adventure,' as Peter Pan would say, and one has so constantly to resort to the philosopher's stone. And that may be why, in the old days, what used to be called 'the touching process' was so much in vogue. Some years ago, it was hardly safe to pass certain 'marble halls' in the Strand without being asked to part with about half your week's salary by one and another of those of your brethren who happened to be resting.

“ And although, of recent years, the social conditions of the actor have improved out of all knowledge, some of us, occasionally, still find it is cheaper to take a taxi down the Strand, no matter how passionately fond we may be of walking. A *confrère* lately told me how, having long ago concluded that ‘ the Strand was safe,’ he was ambling carelessly along past the bottom of Bedford Street when, before he had the chance to escape, he was affably hailed by a notorious ‘ touch.’

“ By instinct, he put his hand in his pocket to bring forth the needed coin. But no, he had misjudged his man. Instead, he was invited in dulcet tones, for old times’ sake, to come and have a drink ! My friend gladly accepted the invitation, eager to show his appreciation of the altered state of affairs. He did not perceive his mistake until the time came round for him to pay for the second drink in return. Then it was that the ‘ touch ’ artfully became possessed of his change, and—holding up five shillings of it—he inquired suavely, ‘ Till Friday ? ’



THE GAIETY THEATRE.

“I am thankful to say, however, that dodges of that kind are no longer taken for granted and smiled upon as part of the daily round. Whereas, thirty years ago, the English actor was supposed to eke out his existence in odoriferous attics on kippers and haddocks, flavoured—should a dragon of a landlady refuse to supply him on 'tic with more stimulating beverages—by a little weak tea, his successor of to-day is pictured by popular fancy as a resplendent gentleman of royal engagements, who lives mostly on champagne and caviare.

“One hardly ever sees, nowadays, the stage hero who walks down the Strand in ‘puttees’ and a yachting-cap, although in rare specimens he still exists, and I was rather amused when an actor friend of mine accosted him near Charing Cross Station the other day with the mild protest: ‘Excuse me, Fred, but I’ve got all the shooting rights round here.’

“In a little talk I had with Max Reinhardt, crossing over from Dover to Calais, a short time ago, he said the main thing that

struck him about the average English actor was that he was so amazingly prosperous.

‘You hardly ever meet a German actor who owns a dress-suit,’ this greatest representative of the German stage pointed out, ‘and the reason for this is, obviously, that he moves in circles where he is hardly ever expected to wear it.’ But with the English actor it is different. And the gratifying fact that he has now come into his own, socially, and is courted on every side where, formerly, he was shunned, has led to a complete change in his point of view. He has now as much self-respect as any other professional man. If his luck is out, he neither whines nor wines quite so freely as of yore.

“And so it is, even in our open-handed profession, I have known West End actors who will not confess when they are hard up. ‘If we have to starve, dear, we will at any rate do it in the height of fashion,’ one of them consolingly said to his wife, during a slack period of a few months ago.

“I heard recently of the case of an actor who had gone through such a long spell of

ill-luck that he was reduced to his last shilling. He firmly declined, however, to go in for the old-time 'Bodega' loafing or the equally hoary process of 'touching in the Strand.' Knowing how hard up he was, a fellow-player asked him to join him in a meal at a certain restaurant. As soon as he sat down to it, the full state of his wretchedness was revealed. In spite of his strength of mind, the hungry man could not help betraying his hunger. At length, when he had eaten his fill and they had passed from the restaurant to the bar beyond, his companion suggested a *liqueur*. 'No,' he insisted. 'Have this with me.' "

CHAPTER XVII

THE SERIOUS BUSINESS OF GAIETY

“AH, if only I had the *time* to be sober!” a bibulous acquaintance sighed one day, as he espied Grossmith in a quiet corner of the Club, earnestly engaged in thrashing out the knotty points of an important business contract with a theatrical manager. “If only I could afford the time!”

To recall this melancholy little reflection—in itself, a curious blend ’twixt the grave and the gay—is to realise that Gaiety can develop into an equally serious business, whether it be followed in the professional or the amateur way. The man who uttered it is one of the few surviving members of that old brigade who ran the business along fearsomely heavy and what now seem, in these temperate times, to be hopelessly antiquated lines. They

started their Gaiety on a light breakfast of gin and bitters in the forenoon, and went forth to face the strenuous labours of the day with a brave attempt at cheerfulness, although, I fear, they were often *distrain* and depressed. Going their rounds as painstakingly as any doctor, and with the aid of long pauses for stimulating bouts of refreshment *en route*, they travelled slowly through Clubland, from Hyde Park Corner to St. James's Street, until, by luncheon time, they had succeeded, to the best of their ability, in scaling the topmost heights of their ambition; and if they were not passably drunk, they were certainly filled with a gentlemanly glow.

Well, that used to be one way of attending to the Business of Gaiety, but lately it has gone out of fashion. Our modern social code no longer recognises that a slight touch of inebriation lends an additional note of distinction to the bearing of our men-about-town; while as for the man who gets hopelessly drunk in daylight, he is shunned as the most boring of all possible bores—the absolute edge, which is the new name for the limit.

To get drunk at all, indeed, as everybody knows, is no longer considered to be such good form as it used to be. "And I am not at all sure that Perrier water has not largely contributed to the change," Grossmith here interjects. "What can sound more *chic* than to say one prefers Perrier at lunch—quite apart from the fact that one knows, all the while, that one's preference will not be followed for the rest of the afternoon by an inconveniently drowsy after-dinner effect? For many people, especially if they happen to be women, the name, alone, has a charm."

A casual survey of Grossmith's own career shows that Gaiety, as soon as it is pursued as a profession, becomes a mightily strenuous life-work. In an age of brilliant slackers, there is a theory afloat that the man who is gay can never be industrious. Yet, although he is one of the recognised Apostles of Gaiety, Grossmith, in his own particular line—I admit it is not the line of the butcher, baker, or the candle-stick maker—is one of the most industrious of men.

To see him at his busiest you must meet



From "The Entr'acte."

THE FIRM OF GROSSMITH AND SON.

him when he is going the pace ; that is to say, when he is in the height of one of his “ busy seasons.” At such times he works tremendously hard—how hard it would be difficult for an outsider to fathom, unless he could be given a cinematograph picture of this seeming idler living his daily day. He is writing, perhaps, the libretto of a musical comedy, already more than a trifle overdue ; and at the same time, it may be, he is responsible, both as author and producer, for one or more of those topical *revues* he has lately initiated at the Empire and the Alhambra in the style that has long been so popular in France. Behold him then by day, working in this way, and, incidentally, rushing about from rehearsal to rehearsal at the different theatres and music-halls where the enterprises with which he is connected are afoot ; while at night he still keeps his place in the bill at the Gaiety Theatre. He becomes, at these strenuous periods, a champion hustler ; and before to-day it has happened that, practically in the midst of it all, he has been called away to Paris, Vienna, or even New York, in



Photo by Ellis & Walery.

"GEE-GEE" OFF THE STAGE.

quest of the right sort of catchy song, the right sort of ragtime tune, or the right sort of leading lady.

At the age of seventeen Grossmith began to qualify for the Business of Gaiety with much the same seriousness as other promising youths have set themselves to study medicine or the law ; and, although it was a business in which his father was established before him, it has probably been his lot to work a good deal harder at it than would have been necessary if he had followed a more humdrum occupation or remained in the Army—the career for which his parents had destined him.

A boy's hankering after the stage, like murder, will out ; and so, one fine day, it came to pass that when " Haste to the Wedding," a piece written by W. S. Gilbert and set to music by George Grossmith senior, was about to be staged, Mr. Gilbert, as he then was, knowing the direction in which the young man's fancy had turned, said to his father, " How would you like your boy to make his start with us ? " George Grossmith junior was accordingly sent for.

The part offered to him was only a small one, and the salary that went with it was a modest guinea a week. Mr. George Grossmith senior was a man of shrewd common sense, and the policy he adopted in regard to young George would surely be commended by even the thriftiest parent.

“You are now able to earn your own living; henceforward, earn it,” was his short but sweet way of insisting that the youngster must fend for himself. And, apparently, the youngster did. For the first two or three years, despite the fact that, as the saying goes, “he sat on the steps of the agents” in the approved style of the struggling young actor, he had, perforce, to content himself with two or three-line parts; and “it is really quite surprising,” he is now able to testify, “with what an extraordinary amount of individuality and distinctiveness you can invest two or three lines if you are young and enthusiastic and, at the same time, are trying hard.”

Two or three lines, albeit, were hardly enough to satisfy the histrionic aspirations

of an ambitious young man; and young George soon decided to take the law into his own hands—to dare or to die. At that time, he was playing Lord Percy Pimpleton in “Morocco Bound,” one of the first musical comedies ever staged. Instead of limiting Lord Percy to the prescribed two or three lines, young George determined off his own bat to give the nobleman a longer innings.

His part had been primarily invented, to use an old theatrical phrase, “to feed the comedian,” but why, the intrepid youth secretly argued with himself, should not the comedian in return be induced “to feed” him? At length, one night, as he stood before the audience, he made his experiment.

“I heard a very good story the other day about a brandy-and-soda,” he began fatuously, with the nearest approach he could muster to what he imagined, from his father’s account of it, was the traditional Lord Dundreary style. “Did you really? Well, let’s hear it then,” replied the comedian, slightly nettled by the young fellow’s effrontery, and, since he did not think he could rise to the

occasion, bent on teaching him a lesson by showing him up before the crowded house.

“And so I was allowed to tell my poor little story,” Grossmith now recalls. “I struggled through with it as best I could, winding up with the words: ‘Do you like brandy-and-soda?—soda I.’” The maiden effort, on the whole, was a success, and from that moment he rushed on the stage at every conceivable opportunity, and spoke forth impromptu gags.

Such an experiment, embarked upon without managerial sanction, was fraught with tremendous risk. It might, of course, have failed; but, happily, it succeeded. The audience greeted the appearances of Lord Percy with uproarious laughter, and so the small part was allowed to swell until it became one of the longest in the cast.

Instead of being blamed by the management, the young actor was highly praised for his enterprise. . . . “After all, you know, if the Jameson raid had come off, instead of being sent to prison, the raiders would have all been heroes,” is Grossmith’s remark when he

relates this incident of nearly twenty years ago.

Grossmith has always regulated his career on the principle that it is the business of the actor to take anything he can get. In his view, the actor whose reputation is not thoroughly established must not pause to consider whether he is temperamentally fitted to play any particular part. Let him undertake whatever part is offered to him, and if he has any natural gift for the stage, he will soon find his artistic level. Let him follow his calling on conscientious, business-like lines, leaving Art, with the capital A, more or less to take care of itself, or, at any rate, entrusting it to the care of the managers, and, as soon as the proficiency, begotten of hard work, asserts itself, his instinct as an artist will emerge from behind his personality as a business man.

Such, at any rate, has been Grossmith's own experience. He by no means surrendered himself to the portrayal of "bloods" without a struggle. There were intervals when he essayed other characters. He proved quite

admirable, for instance, in the *rôle* of a drunkard when Mrs. Langtry staged "The Degenerates," but it was not a *rôle* in which the public liked to see him, and he was soon forced to return to his earlier love. Having realised that Gaiety was his supreme *métier*, thenceforward he began to devote himself seriously to it as a career, and when ultimately he felt he had reached the right pitch of maturity, he extended his operations in much the same way as a successful business man would do in a more avowedly commercial calling.

One hears a good deal about the free-and-easy lot of the actor. Yet, is he wholly to be envied? When he is working his hardest, his life becomes, as often as not, a sort of highly unpleasant picnic. He has to suffer many minor deprivations, the most irritating of which is, perhaps, that he rarely knows, from one hour to another, when and where his next meal will be. At rehearsal times, he has so constantly to live through the day on a sandwich and a cocktail that it would hardly seem amazing if he forgot altogether how to

use a knife and fork. . . . On week-nights, unless he is resting, he can never dine at a conventional hour.

“ But even if we actors had the opportunity to indulge freely in the pleasures of the table, I think we would be wise to refrain,” says Grossmith. “ You see, indulgence of that sort has such a distressing effect on the physique, and most of us are as fearful as women lest we should ever get fat.

“ It is, of course, quite another matter if we happen to be stars in a firmament apart—like the late Herbert Campbell or the happily present Barclay Gammon, in which case, of course, I admit a tendency towards *embonpoint* may give just the right spice of charm and finish to one’s artistry as a whole. But with those of us who move and have our being on more modest lines, to get fat is a heartrending professional calamity. In my own case, I am happy to say, so far I have not seen any outward and visible sign that I shall ever be overtaken by it.

“ Still, you never know, and as it is, most of us feel we cannot afford to play ducks and

drakes with our figures. We must do all we can to preserve them—or such remnants of them as remain with the advance of years—and we are duly careful. One persevering *jeune premier* of my acquaintance, aged about forty-seven and a half, lives in such mortal dread of being run to earth by the Nemesis of Obesity that, although he has a sweet tooth, he eschews a second lump of sugar in his tea as if it were poison. And he takes all manner of other precautions.

“Little things of this sort are of vital importance to every actor. But if they seem trivial from the standpoint of the outsider, and he is still unconvinced that the business of gaiety has its serious side, he had better attend the rehearsal of a musical play at the ‘Gaiety’ or ‘Daly’s.’ It will be by no means easy for him to secure that privilege, however. It seems to be only in Paris that it is thought necessary for the proper conduct of a rehearsal that, besides the manager of the theatre, the bailee, the *actionnaires*, the producer, the composer, the author or authors, there should be, also, seated in the



AU THÉÂTRE-RÉJANE—LES AUTEURS P'ASSANT LA REVUE DE LEURS INTERPRÈTES.

stalls, a host of other people—for instance, the wife and lady friends of the composer and the gentleman friends of the composer's wife, the aristocratic friends of the chief actress and the less aristocratic friends of the leading actor, all of whom give vent to their opinions with the utmost volubility.

“I remember when I was rehearsing in Paris for the *Réjane revue* how mystified I was by the babble of tongues and the conflicting counsels that on all sides prevailed. As we neared the night of the production, I began vaguely to wonder, ‘Should we ever be ready? Would the *revue* really be staged?’ Yet staged it eventually was, and, to the delight of all Paris, it proved a tremendous success, reflecting the greatest credit on all concerned.

“In England, of course, things are altogether different. Imagine George Edwardes, that Napoleonic producer under whom I have worked for so many years, rehearsing under such conditions! As soon as he takes a play in hand, the theatre is always cleared of all who are not actively concerned in the pro-

duction. With the 'Guvnor' in command, nothing but 'the play's the thing,' and the interests of everybody and everything are momentarily sacrificed until perfection, as he understands it, has been attained.

"Should a luckless actor happen to displease Mr. Edwardes during the final stage of a rehearsal it may, quite possibly, go hard with him. . . 'Take it off. Take it off!' I remember him calling angrily from the stalls, as he watched the exaggerated antics of a comedian who had been called from the provinces to fill a place in the 'Gaiety' bill. 'What sir—this wig?' asked the recruit, pointing to a bright red shock-head of hair with which he had adorned himself. 'No—not the wig, but the man inside it,' came the decided retort.

"Mr. Edwardes is a good judge of men and also horses, but he has a poor memory for names. . . . If a man in his employ is named Johnson, and he once chooses to call him Williams, then by the name of Williams the man will ever afterwards be known.

"Engaged to write some of the lyrics in

one production, was that popular singer and maker of songs Mr. Leslie Stiles; and a story is in circulation that Mr. Edwardes, realising a new song would be needed for Miss Connie Ediss in the second act, suddenly sent forth a peremptory order for Mr. Eustace Miles to come to him, at once!

“Although a little baffled, the subordinate who received the ‘Guvnor’s’ instruction did not dare to question it at such a busy moment. And so the vegetarian restaurant was rung up, and Mr. Eustace Miles, not altogether without protest, because he too, was busy, arrived on the scene only to find he wasn’t wanted after all!

“Another time, on looking through an evening paper while seated in his office, I casually informed my chief that Tolstoi was dead. ‘Oh dear, what a pity!’ he exclaimed, in his quickly sympathetic way. “‘Good-bye Summer’ was my favourite song.’

“Apparently, Mr. Edwardes inclines to Hamlet’s way of thinking.: ‘What’s in a name?’ And when one considers how vast are the projects he controls, need one marvel



Photo by Foulsham & Barnfield.

THE FAMILIAR "GAIEETY" TRIO.

Mr. Teddy Payne, "Gee-Gee," and Miss Connie Ediss.

if, occasionally, in the smaller things of life, he should get a little mixed? The pieces at his different theatres have an awkward knack of coming on at the same time, but, even during the busiest rehearsal seasons, he watches as alertly as ever the progress of the legion of touring companies that are always appearing under his banner in all parts of the world. Talk of the serious Business of Gaiety! How many other business magnates are there who have stood for so long at the helm of such a gigantic network of organisation? No wonder of late years his health has shown signs of the strain!

“To George Edwardes more than to any other man must go the credit of having invented the one class of entertainment that is better done in this country than in any other. France has provided the world of the theatre with its best Comedies; America stands supreme as the only country where Melodrama is produced realistically enough to be taken seriously; Italy and Germany lead the way in Opera; and Russia has given us the finest Dancers: while, thanks to George

Edwardes, it is the 'Musical Play'—let our more moonstruck critics scoff as they may—for which Great Britain is chiefly renowned.

"When a foreign king, or his representative in the shape of a prince or a diplomatist, is received in our midst, what happens? At once the distinguished stranger finds that all ways lead to the 'Gaiety' or 'Daly's.' A box must be taken for his benefit at one or other of these theatres; otherwise our proverbial British hospitality would be robbed of half its lustre, and—who knows?—our international friendship might be gravely impaired."

"Why do we all go to the 'Gaiety'?" . . . "We all go," wrote Mr. Walkley, a little time ago, "to enjoy the 'Gaiety' company disporting themselves—Mr. George Grossmith wearing his clothes, Mr. Edmund Payne twisting his face, Miss Olive May"—or whoever her prototype now is—"moving her limbs, Miss Connie Ediss speaking her mind, and Miss Phyllis Dare"—or whoever the *ingénue* of the moment may be—"looking pretty."

The case was rather more delicately put by

the late John Oliver Hobbes, who said : “ For half a guinea I can see at the Gaiety Theatre some brilliant low-comedy impersonations, some charming dancing, and some highly-accomplished young actresses. I can hear witty songs, written by educated writers ; I am given some delicious fooling in the dialogue, and as much plot as I want—a pleasant diagram, in fact, of the British character.”

Meanwhile, one vital truth stands out above all these different explanations of why we go to the “Gaiety.” Wherever else we fail to go—*we certainly all go there!* And most of us feel inwardly, whatever we may say outwardly, that it will be a black day for England should we become a people bereft of the blandishments of the musical play, living in that dry and barren land pictured by a carping contemporary poet :

“ Where no more the Ivan Carylls
And the Rubens cease to Paul.”

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This is a very readable novel in the author's best manner. Rachael Despensier, a successful artist, spends a summer holiday in a Westmoreland village, living at an old farm-house, and making friends with the villagers. Grinstone, a local baronet, is grabbing the land to make a deer run, and Rachael through championing the cause of a farmer comes into collision with him, although adored by his delicate little son. Right-of-way troubles ensue, and violence disturbs the peace. Grinstone's elder son and heir returns from Canada, where he has imbibed Radical notions. He sympathises with the villagers, and is attracted towards Rachael, whom he eventually marries. The baronet is determined to oust the farmer whom Rachael had championed, when the tragic death of his younger son leads him to relinquish the management of the estate to his heir.

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Stephen Gaunt, an English sculptor famous in Italy, is the father of a son born out of wedlock of whom he has never heard. In his youth, a light attachment broken in a causeless fit of jealousy drove him abroad, but when the story opens he comes home to execute a commission, and meets his son without knowing him. In doing so, he encounters a childless couple, who have passed the boy off as their own since infancy, when his mother died. They are an elder half-brother, who has always hated Stephen, and his sensitive, tender and simple wife, who loves the boy with all her heart, fears to lose him, and yet is tormented by her secret. A romantic friendship springs up between son and father; and the chain of accidents and proofs by which he learns the truth, his struggle for control of the boy, and the effect of these events on the boy and his foster mother make a fascinating story.

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With a frontispiece from a painting by Edouard Detaille.

Against the vivid background of the Franco-German War, there shines out, in this novel, the very human story of Pierre Lafitte, a French country lad. Other prominent figures in the story are the woman Pierre loves, her father—a fine old Colonel of Dragoons—and a German spy, not without attractive qualities, whose fate becomes entangled with theirs. The book abounds in striking situations, including the discovery and escape of the spy, the departure of the Dragoons for the war, the remorse of a French General who feels personally responsible for the men he has lost, a night in a hospital-tent, the last flicker of the defence of Paris, and the entry of the German troops. It is a remarkable book.

A Babe in Bohemia.

FRANK DANBY

Author of "The Heart of a Child," "Dr. Phillips," etc., etc.
(11th edition).

Frank Danby, to gain information for this novel, joined the Salvation Army, went through their training home and Refuge at Clapton, and finally became attached to the dépôt of the so-called "Gutter, Slum and Garret Brigade," from which the work among the very poorest is carried out. This full-length novel, having been out of print, has now been practically re-written by the author, and although the thread of the story remains, every page has been extensively revised, and it will be found to be as good as anything recently done by this popular writer.

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MAXIME FORMONT

Author of "A Child of Chance," etc. Translated from the French
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This is a powerful novel of the life and times of Cæsare Borgia, in which history and romance are mingled with a strong hand. The story is told of the abduction of Alva Colonna on the eve of her marriage with Propero Sarelli, when she is carried off to his palace at Rome and becomes his slave-mistress. The subsequent events, more or less following history or tradition, include the introduction of the dark woman of gipsy extraction, who enamours Cæsare, and poisons the wine by which the Colonna and her old lover Sarelli die. The story closes with a description of Cæsare's last days and death. This novel has passed through several editions in France.

The Price of Friendship.

E. EVERETT-GREEN

Author of "Clive Lorimer's Marriage," "Duckworth's Diamonds,"
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Miss Everett-Green has had a remarkable output of novels in the past, but this one, her latest, is the longest—and strongest—standing to her name. It is the story of a man who impersonates his friend, from the very best of motives, and plunges himself into complications and dangers. Like all of this author's tales, it finishes with a startling climax.

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One of the most thrilling stories of mystery, love and adventure which these popular collaborators have ever written. It is a vivid, human story, red-hot with incident and excitement, the central character being a man, who, after ten years' imprisonment for fraud, returns to the world with his past so effectively buried that he is known as a man of wealth, a Member of Parliament, and an Advocate for Prison Reform. The tale is said to be worthy of Poe or Gaboriau.

The Split Peas. HEADON HILL

Author of "Troubled Waters," "A Rogue in Ambush," "The Thread of Proof," etc.

The interest of this story centres in the attempt of a socialistic, time-serving Cabinet Minister, aided and abetted by a mysterious foreigner, who poses as a Soho revolutionary but is in reality a spy, to undermine the loyalty of the British Army. His efforts are frustrated by a young officer of the Guards, with the assistance of two lively Eton boys. Mr. Headon Hill is himself an old Etonian, and he has put much local colour into his book.

Captain Hawks, Master Mariner. OSWALD KENDALL

Admirers of the novels of Mr. W. W. Jacobs should read this. It is a story of three men who cannot and will not abide dullness. Though separated superficially by discipline and convention, Captain Hawks, Grummet and "Cert'nly" Wilfred are brothers "under their skins," and are controlled by the same insatiable desire for variety. Their thirst for the unexpected is amply satisfied in the search for an illusive cargo of sealskins, purchased without having been seen by Captain Hawks. That the crew are nearly drowned, frozen, starved, and smothered, proves that they succeeded in a search for a life where things happen. A capital yarn.

A Star of the East: A Story of Delhi. CHARLES E.

PEARCE. Author of "The Amazing Duchess," "The Beloved Princess," "Love Besieged," "Red Revenge," etc.

This book completes the trilogy of Mr. Pearce's novels of the Indian Mutiny, of which "Love Besieged" and "Red Revenge" were the first and second. The scene is laid in Delhi, the city of all others where for the past hundred years the traditions of ancient dynasties and the barbaric splendours of the past have been slowly retreating before the ever-advancing influence of the West. The conflict of passions between Nara, the dancing girl, in whose veins runs the blood of Shah Jehan, the most famous of the Kings of Delhi, and Clare Stanhope, born and bred in English conventionality, never so pronounced as in the Fifties, is typical of the differences between the East and the West. The rivalry of love threads its way through a series of exciting incidents, culminating in the massacre and the memorable siege of Delhi.

A Gentlewoman of France. RENÉ BOYLESVE

This novel, crowned by the Academy, has had a great vogue in France, twelve editions having been sold. It is the story of a provincial girl who makes a marriage of convenience with a man who sees in her the best qualities of wifehood and motherhood. The story shows how before great temptation she stands firm and emerges chastened but conquering.

In simple, direct fashion, the sweet and most admirable wife tells her story, and it rings extraordinarily true.

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